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Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 18: Pure Yang

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the universe was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller...than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

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Chapter 1 – Evacuation

Brightheart Island.

Ji Ning and the others landed onto the ground. Upon seeing him appear, the servants and maids of Brightheart Island all called out in respectful unison, "Young master."

"Ji Ning, you've returned." A frantic-looking, black-robed Ji Truekeep came walking over.

"Uncle Truekeep." Ning smiled. "What has you looking so worried?"

"How can I not be worried? If it weren't for the fact that I knew you were undergoing your tribulation, I would've gone looking for you long ago. Thank goodness...thank goodness you are back!" As Truekeep spoke, an armored soldier began to walk towards them from not too far away. Ning immediately recognized this man as a captain of the Imperial Guard of the imperial capital, a Loose Immortal soldier.

Truekeep immediately said, "This general came all the way here from the imperial capital on the Xia Emperor's orders. He's been waiting here for you for two months."

"Two months?" Ning was startled.

"If you didn't come back in three days...I would've gone looking for you, even thought I know you were undergoing your tribulation," Truekeep said.

The fact that Ning's Primaltwin was undergoing the Celestial Tribulation wasn't a secret; both the Xia Emperor and the Seamless Gate knew, and so Ning couldn't be bothered to hide it from anyone else.

"Does the Xia Emperor need something?" Ning looked towards the Imperial Guard captain.

The captain said respectfully, "Immortal Darknorth, I have come on the orders of the Xia Emperor to deliver this to you in person." He held up a leather scroll, offering it to Ning.

Ning reached out to accept it.

"I'll be leaving now." The captain immediately turned to leave.

"Let me send you off." Clan leader Ji Truekeep moved to escort the captain.

Ji Ning opened the leather scroll. The nearby Immortal Diancai and Yu Wei were both puzzled; what urgent matter was this?

Upon seeing the contents of the leather scroll, Ning's face changed slightly.

"Ji Ning, what is it?" Immortal Diancai asked. "Of course, if it's something that cannot be told to others, you don't have to tell me."

"There's no point to keeping this a secret," Ning said. By now, Truekeep had returned as well. Truekeep said nervously, "All I know is that the messenger captain said that this is critically urgent news that had to be delivered to you, Ji Ning, before the sixth day of the eighth month. Thankfully, you finally came back with seven days to spare. Right...what is this about?"

Ning swept everyone present with his gaze. Mu Northson, Little Qing, Autumn Leaf, Immortal Diancai, and Yu Wei all looked back at him.

"The Seamless Gate is about to truly launch their war against the Grand Xia," Ning said.

"War?"

"So it's finally starting..."

"But..."

They all felt their hearts sink. All of them, however, had mentally

prepared themselves for this long ago. Some major worlds of the Three Realms had already descended into war, and some of the weaker ones had already been subjugated. But of course, things happened more slowly with the more powerful major worlds. The Grand Xia was one example; things were just beginning here. The Seamless Gate's attempted conquest of it wasn't something that could be resolved in a day or two.

"By now...everyone will have to choose a side," Ning said. "I trust that soon, the entire Grand Xia will be divided into two sides. One will be the Xia Emperor's side, which is to say Daofather Crimsonbright's side. The other will of course be the Seamless Gate's side. Naturally... I will of course stand with the Xia Emperor."

"Right." Everyone present nodded.

They all knew of the feud between Ning and the Seamless Gate. Ning was their leader; they naturally would follow him wherever he led.

In turn, Ning was definitely going to follow Patriarch Subhuti. Subhuti, Daoist Threelives...both of them were on the side of the Nuwa Alliance. Be it for personal reasons or organizational reasons, Ning was definitely going to stand with the Nuwa Alliance as well.

"The evening of the sixth, I am to head to the Skylight Palace of the imperial capital. I imagine many Celestial Immortals will be present, and even True Immortals and Empyrean Gods will appear," Ning said. "Of the Ji clan, I am the only person required to take part in battle; no one else needs to participate."

"Then what of the Black-White College?" Immortal Diancai asked.

"I imagine this same information has been sent to the Black-White College already," Ning said. "I don't know the details with regards to the College; Master, if you return to the College, you should be able to find out right away."

"Right. I'll go back right away to take a look." Immortal Diancai

nodded, then immediately flew away on a cloud, quickly disappearing into the horizons.

Ning continued, "On the sixth day of the eighth month, I am to go to the Skylight Palace. Before the sixth...the Ji clan needs to evacuate."

"Evacuate?" Autumn Leaf, Ji Truekeep, Uncle White, and the others were all stunned.

"Ji Ning, where are we evacuating to?" Truekeep asked.

"Here is a Pure Yang treasure, a 'Violetdawn Pearl'." Ning waved his hand, and a mottled, violet-colored pearl appeared out of nowhere. This pearl was one of the Pure Yang treasures which Ning had acquired when he attacked those eighteen Celestial Immortals of the Seamless Gate. Alas, although those eighteen had a few Pure Yang treasures, none of them had any top-grade treasures!

The Violetdawn Pearl was used to capture and bewilder foes. It contained a minor world within it that was comparable to the Earth of his previous life in size. It would be very simple to have the Ji clansmen move there and live there.

"A Pure Yang treasure?" Truekeep was rather stunned. To many Immortal cultivators, Pure Yang treasures were mere myths. Only Celestial Immortals could even use Pure Yang treasures!

Yu Wei and the others, however, were quite calm; they had far more experience.

"While the war is going on in the Grand Xia, I won't be able to guarantee the safety of Swallow Mountain. Evacuation is the only option," Ning said. "Uncle Truekeep, don't worry; I will definitely protect the Ji clan."

"Alright. I'll go give the order right now to have the clansmen make their preparations," Truekeep said.

"Good. Three days from now, we will begin the evacuation," Ning

said.

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Night.

Ning, Immortal Diancai, Yu Wei, and Celestial Immortal Unity were meeting at the Black-White College.

"Per the Xia Emperor's orders...the two Celestial Immortals of the Black-White College, along with all of the Loose Immortals, must arrive at the imperial palace of the Grand Xia by the evening of the sixth," Immortal Diancai said.

"The Northmont clan of Stillwater received the same order; all the Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals must go." Unity sighed. "The Xia Emperor is being fairly benevolent; he isn't forcing us to send our Primal Daoists or Earth Immortals into battle."

Unity then chuckled. "Right; the Seamless Gate has sent yet another messenger to me. They are inviting me to go to Whitepole City on the sixth. They said that if I went, I would no longer be an enemy; I would be a friend."

"They actually dare to send yet another invitation?" Immortal Diancai was shocked.

"Perhaps the Seamless Gate thinks that senior Unity might lose his mind and join them," Ning laughed.

"From the looks of it, neither the Xia Emperor nor the Seamless Gate is going to hide their conflict any longer. Both of them chose the sixth of the eighth month..." Unity sighed. "However, one meeting is at the imperial palace of the Grand Xia, while the other is at Whitepole City. It seems as though Whitepole City has already joined the Seamless Gate!"

Ji Ning, Immortal Diancai, and the others all had solemn looks on their faces.

Whitepole City...

This was a very low-key city, an incredibly low-key city. It was incredibly rare for people in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia to hear of any news from Whitepole City. However, the Whitepole clan was one of the top ten ancient clans of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. They were content to just hold onto a small piece of land, and they had no interest in going to the imperial capital to take up official positions. Instead, they had built up their fief of Whitepole Commandery to the point where it was almost completely invulnerable to attack. The power of this clan was actually greater than that of the brash Youngflame clan's! Who would've thought that they would have silently, wordlessly joined the Seamless Gate? Their city had even ended up as the headquarters for the Seamless Gate's conference! From this, one could see how much the Seamless Gate trusted the Whitepole clan.

"The reason why the Xia Emperor was able to force the other clans to join him was because he had the Primordial Imperial Clan behind him; this was why he was able to finally unify the world," Unity said. "In truth, however, there had been many clans that were struggling quite fiercely against the Xiamang clan. The Whitepole clan was one of the clans that struggled with the Xiamang clan for supremacy. However...they didn't have enough of a foundation, and so in the end they submitted."

"If the many clans of the world all joined forces, the Xiamang clan would be completely unable to resist them," Unity continued. "In fact...there have been marquis-led rebellions in the past. Only after that did the Xia Emperor set up the massive commandery cities to further solidify his rule."

"I wonder...how many marquises have joined the Seamless Gate?" Unity sighed.

Ning nodded as well.

There were differences amongst the various marquises.

The likes of the Xiamang clan and the Kindwater clan were all branches of major clans of the Primordial Era!

The Whitepole clan, however, originally belonged to Celestial Immortal Whitepole, a lone cultivator. After Pangu's World was destroyed, Celestial Immortal Whitepole had established his clan within the newly created world that was later known as the Grand Xia. Afterwards, he had broken through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal; this naturally resulted in the Whitepole clan flourishing and becoming powerful. Alas...Whitepole didn't have any powerful backers, as he had created his clan by himself, unlike the Xiamang clan or the Kindwater clan, which had the major clans of the Primordial Era behind them.

"True Immortal Whitepole has always been very low-key. After the Grand Xia was unified, he has never acted against the Grand Xia Dynasty," Unity said. "In addition, I know of two others at the True Immortal or Empyrean God level; one belongs to the Kindwater clan, the other belongs to the Skyfarmer clan. Neither of them acted against the Grand Xia either; clearly, they aren't willing to make enemies out of the Xia Emperor."

Ning was surprised.

The Skyfarmer clan?

He knew that the Kindwater clan had an Empyrean God behind it, but this was the first time he had heard that the Skyfarmer clan had such a power behind it as well. Celestial Immortal Unity, who had lived through the Fiendgod Era, truly was a man who knew many mysteries.

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Ning's group, without question, stood by the side of the Xia Emperor. However, they couldn't help but feel worried by how powerful the Seamless Gate's side was.

Two sides were struggling for supremacy...

Would the Xia Emperor suffer a disastrous defeat, or would the Seamless Gate be sent fleeing in disgrace?

All of this was unknown for now. However, one thing was certain... this was going to be a savage, cruel war! After all, many major worlds had already been conquered, while many others were already burning in the fires of war. The power of the Seamless Gate...it caused everyone in the Three Realms to shudder.

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Ning's Primaltwin was able to easily bind the Pure Yang treasure, 'Violetdawn Pearl'. The evacuation of the Ji clan started. Since there weren't many Ji clansmen to begin with, the evacuation was fairly simple; in just the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, the evacuation was completedly.

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Uncle White, Little Qing, Autumn Leaf, Mu Northson, and Ji Truekeep stood atop the clouds, staring down at the vast world below them.

"Time to leave Swallow Mountain." Truekeep let out a sigh. This was the land which countless generations of the Ji clan had worked to till and make prosperous.

"We'll be back," the black-robed Ning said.

Whoosh.

Ning suddenly waved his hand, releasing his Celestial Immortal energy. Using a worldshaping technique, he manifested an utterly enormous palm out of natural energy, a palm that was many hundreds of kilometers in size. The enormous palm looked misty and blurry, as it was formed by energy and air. Suddenly, the giant palm made a downwards grab!

The entire Serpentwing Lake, along with the centermost Brightheart

Island, was caught up by the giant palm. Not even a single drop of water was missed.

“Come in.” Ning used a technique, instantly drawing the entire Serpentwing Lake into the Violetdawn Pearl.

Serpentwing Lake held extraordinary meaning for him. He didn’t want to leave Serpentwing Lake here. If it ended up being destroyed...he would be filled with endless regrets.

If Ning had the energy of a Pure Yang True Immortal, he would’ve been able to move away the entire Swallow Mountain region of a hundred thousand kilometers!

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The underwater estate.

Ning’s true body emerged from the Wargod Hall. He had just successfully challenged the highest level of the Wargod Hall, the tenth level.

“The war is about to begin. It is time for me to find a suitable Pure Yang treasure for myself.” Ning headed straight for the Treasure Hall.

Chapter 2 – Ten Thousand Immortals Converge

Although the tenth level was seemingly difficult, in truth Ji Ning had already acquired the power to overcome it by the time he had returned from the Nihilum Zone. However, since his Primaltwin had yet to overcome the tribulation, he wouldn't have been able to put the Pure Yang treasure to any use, and so he hadn't been in a rush to attempt it. The treasure he had acquired last time, the 'Sole-Ki Nine Element Pearls', he had traded to the Xia Emperor for many other treasures, so as to repair the Rahu Bow and train in both the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] and the [Starseizing Hand].

This time, there was no way Ning would trade the treasure away.

The war was beginning. He needed powerful treasures for it! Although he had acquired quite a few treasures from the Seamless Gate, especially the three top-grade Pure Yang treasures and the Protocosmic spirit-treasure which Old Man Yuan had given him, alas...the only treasure which was of significant use to him was the Nineleaf Snowlotus. The others weren't very useful to him; in fact, they weren't even of great use to Yu Wei. Thus, Ning had given one of the Pure Yang treasures to Immortal Diancai, then put the others into storage.

"I hope there are flying swords." As Ning stepped into the Treasure Hall, he saw the giant yellow bear waiting for him.

"Ji Ning, you can now choose one of the twenty-two Pure Yang treasures we have available." The giant yellow bear waved his hand, and a book instantly flew towards Ning.

"There are only five more choices than last time?" Ning was surprised.

"These are Pure Yang treasures. How many do you think we have?" The giant yellow bear was irritated.

Last time, Ning had chosen the Sole-Ki Nine Element Pearls out of

eighteen available choices, leaving behind seventeen. Now, five more choices appeared for a total of twenty-two. In truth, however...Ning didn't fancy any of the previous seventeen, and so he would really be choosing from these five.

"Once you become an Empyrean God and become the master of the Starseizing Manor, you'll be able to acquire better treasures. For now...you'll have to continue to act in accordance with Master's rules," the big bear said.

Ning smiled, then lowered his head to flip through the books.

There had to...

There simply had to be top-grade Pure Yang flying swords here! His Primaltwin's [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] truly needed flying swords!

"How extraordinary." Ning could barely breathe.

The Pure Yang treasures which Daoist Threelives had collected truly were not treasures which most Empyrean Gods or True Immortals could hope to touch.

In terms of preciousness...

Of the five Pure Yang treasures, the most precious treasure was a set known as the 'Nine Invisible Mother-Son Hooks'. This was a treasure set formed by nine top-grade and eighty-one middle grade Pure Yang-level poison hooks. They formed into nine mother-son formation sets that could lock down space itself, preventing foes from using Greater Teleportation! In addition, they were extremely fast and possessed astonishing power.

Alas, Ning needed swords, not poison hooks.

"These two sets of flying swords..." Ning revealed a look of delight. Of the five sets, two were actually sword-sets. It seemed as though the giant yellow bear had really been very thoughtful in bringing these

out for him.

The first set of flying swords was known as the Three Pure Ones. These were three top-grade Pure Yang swords that were personally forged by the leader of the Daoist Path, Daoist Three Purities. These three flying swords were extraordinary, even amongst top-grade Pure Yang swords.

In his past life on Earth, Ning had heard of the legends of the Three Pure Ones. However, only after he had embarked upon the path of Immortal cultivation and had become apprenticed to Subhuti had he truly understood that Earth's myths regarding the Exalted Celestial of Primordial Origins, the Exalted Celestial of the Virtuous Dao, and the Exalted Celestial of the Luminous Treasure were all about the same person. These three, the Three Pure Ones, were merely the three mighty incarnations of Daoist Three Purities!

As the leader of the Daoist Path, Daoist Three Purities was acknowledged without dispute as one of the most powerful figures of the Three Realms. The only person one might dare to proclaim as being more powerful as him would probably be Mother Nuwa, who had left the Three Realms to enter the endless primordial chaos.

The second set of flying swords were known as the Ananda ¹ World-Swords.

Ananda was the attendant and protector of the leader of the Buddhist Sangha. Although he was merely an 'attendant', he was also someone who was at the Buddha (Daofather) level of power. His status within the Buddhist Sangha was extremely high, definitely high enough to rank in the top ten.

The Ananda World-Swords were nine top-grade Pure Yang flying swords that had been personally fashioned by Buddha Ananda. They were incomparably sharp, capable of cutting through the miseries of the mortal world.

"I didn't expect that one of these two sets would have been forged by

the leader of the Daoist Path, while the other was created by Buddha Ananda of the Buddhist Sangha." Ning laughed. He was a disciple of Subhuti; although Subhuti knew both Daoist and Buddhist divine abilities and spells, he belonged to neither camp. Both the Daoist Way and the Buddhist Sangha belonged to Mother Nuwa's side; they could be considered allies and friends of Ning.

"Have you made your choice?" The giant yellow bear asked.

"The Ananda World-Swords, I suppose." Ning smiled. "They are nine top-grade Pure Yang flying swords; they can serve as a formation-base, allowing the power of my [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] to increase dramatically."

"Alright."

The giant yellow bear waved his paw.

Whoosh!

Deep from the thronging mass of treasures that hovered in the air above the Treasure Hall, a massively powerful ripple suddenly spread out. Nine flying swords that were completely lacquered came descending downwards, appearing in front of Ji Ning. At the same time, nine little monks that glowed with golden light flew out from the nine swords. The little monks were bald and all dressed yellow robes, and they looked as if they were seven or eight years old.

All nine of these little monks, however, possessed sharp auras that were filled with killing intent.

"So you are our new master?" One of the little monks said.

"Right." Ning nodded.

"Shall you work to sever misery and its bringers from the world, bringing blessings to the countless living beings of the world?" The little monk asked.

Ning smiled. "A storm has arisen, and I shall naturally be forced to kill. I am, however, on the same side as the one who created you, Buddha Ananda."

The nine little monks immediately folded their hands together into a prayer. "Amitabha." ²

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With the nine top-grade Pure Yang swords serving as a formation-base, and the hundreds of top-grade Immortal-ranked swords supporting them...the power of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] instantly increased to become far more greater than that of the Nineleaf Snowlotus, which was a high grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure. Top-grade Pure Yang treasures were normally only comparable to middle grade Protocosmic spirit-treasures, but nine of them combined into a large formation naturally resulted in more power.

In addition, the Nineleaf Snowlotus was mainly meant for trapping and binding foes, while Immortal swords were meant for launching attacks.

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The sixth day of the eighth month. Night was descending.

"Let's go."

Celestial Immortal Unity, the black-robed Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Immortal Diancai, and more than two hundred Loose Immortals all soared into the skies in awe-inspiring fashion, then left through teleportation.

Two hundred Loose Immortals...this represented all of the Loose Immortals of Stillwater Commandery! The various major schools and sects of Stillwater Commandery, such as the Skysplitter Sword Sect, the Hundred Flowers Fairyland, the Dragonhunter clan, and the Eastriver clan actually had even more Loose Immortals than the Black-White College did...and now, all of them were being mobilized.

There was no way any of them would dare to violate the Xia Emperor's orders.

"The war really is starting. All the Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals are being dragged into it." Upon seeing more than two hundred Loose Immortals gather here, Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh to himself.

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The air above the imperial capital of the Grand Xia.

One spatial ripple after another appeared, followed by the emergence of squads of Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals. Every squad had at least a few dozen people, while some had several thousand! If the Youngflame clan hadn't joined the Seamless Gate, their three commanderies would've sent the thousands of Loose Immortals they possessed as well.

This day was simply too stunning.

Countless citizens of the imperial capital raised their heads, staring at the skies. Upon seeing a countless number of Loose Immortals pour in at a steady rate, and even many exalted Celestial Immortals appear, everyone was shocked.

"This many?"

"They have to all be at least Loose Immortals."

"Good heavens..."

The local citizens were completely dazed.

As for the Immortals, they shot out like an endless stream of meteors, shooting through the skies towards the imperial palace.

Whoosh.

Ning's group of two hundred or so from Stillwater Commandery

arrived as well.

"So many." As Ning stared at the many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals who had been gathered here, he couldn't help but feel stunned as well. At the same time, he felt a hint of dread in his heart. "So many Immortals...even Empyrean Gods or True Immortals would be in grave danger if they tried to fight by themselves.

Ning glanced sideways at Yu Wei. Yu Wei's belly still wasn't protruding yet; Ning was a Fiendgod, after all, while Yu Wei was a Celestial Immortal. Their child would spend a fairly long period of time gestating in her womb. Ning mused silently to himself, "She's pregnant; it wouldn't be appropriate for her to go out into battle. I need to have a chat with the Xia Emperor about this."

The delegation from Stillwater Commandery flew towards the imperial palace as well.

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The plaza below the imperial palace. Countless figures had appeared here; it truly was a veritable ocean of people.

The Xia Emperor had given the order long ago that only Celestial Immortals were qualified to go into the Skylight Palace and congregate there. The main reason for this was that there were simply far too many Loose Immortals; there was no way the Skylight Palace could possibly fit that many people aside. Were all the Immortals supposed to be packed in together shoulder-to-shoulder? Even back during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, only a few thousand people had been permitted to sit within the main hall of the Skylight Palace.

"You wait here." Celestial Immortal Unity gave the order, and the two hundred-plus Loose Immortals all landed, leaving Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Immortal Diancai, and Unity to continue flying forwards by themselves towards the Skylight Palace.

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Within the Skylight Palace. Many Celestial Immortals were gathered here, having rushed here from throughout the 3600 commanderies and the four seas. Although the Seamless Gate had worked hard to pull others into their orbit, over the course of countless years, these Celestial Immortals had all become tightly drawn into Daofather Crimsonbright's alliance. Thus, many of them had still chosen to come here.

"So many." Ning, Yu Wei, Immortal Diancai, and Celestial Immortal Unity all entered the palace, and as they did they felt breathless for a moment.

"There has to be at least six...seven thousand people here!" Ning swept his gaze forward.

"Fellow Daoist Ji Ning."

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth."

Ji Ning's arrival caused quite a few Celestial Immortals to head towards them to chat with him. Of course, they said a few things to Celestial Immortal Unity, Yu Wei, and Immortal Diancai as well, but most of them clearly came over to chat with Ning.

Celestial Immortal Unity had been in seclusion for far, far too long. Immortal Diancai was the least-known of the group, with Yu Wei being slightly better off thanks to her being Patriarch Lu's disciple. As for Ji Ning, he was a monstrous genius who was capable of resisting nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan while being merely at the Void level. He was also the disciple of a Daofather with unfathomable power. Naturally, the various Celestial Immortals wanted to become better acquainted with Ning; that way, if they encountered any problems in the future and they wanted to ask Ning to help out, Ning would at least have met them before.

"So many Celestial Immortals." Yu Wei couldn't help but feel stunned

as well.

"In the past, many major clans were hiding some of their oldest experts, who lived in seclusion. The exact number of Celestial Immortals each clan had was always a mystery. However, the storm has now swept the Three Realms. The Xia Emperor has personally ordered them to show up, which is equivalent to Daofather Crimsonbright ordering to them to attend. None of them dare to disobey; after all, Daofather Crimsonbright knows exactly how many Celestial Immortals are under his control," Unity said. "Thus...now that so many of the hidden ones have appeared, the total number is naturally quite high."

As time flowed on, more and more Celestial Immortals arrived. Soon, the number reached over nine thousand, continuing to climb.

"Why haven't any Empyrean Gods or True Immortals arrived?" Immortal Diancai was puzzled.

"I imagine the Xia Emperor has invited all the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to meet with him privately," Celestial Immortal Unity said. "They have higher statuses than we do, after all."

Another two hours passed.

The Celestial Immortals within the Skylight Palace were all provided arranged seating by the attendants here. They each had tables placed in front of them, allowing the entire hall to just barely fit in all of the ten thousand-plus Celestial Immortals who had arrived.

"His Imperial Majesty has arrived."

All of the Celestial Immortals turned their heads in unison to look.

The black-robed Xia Emperor was walking in through a side door... and behind him, there were five True Immortals or Empyrean Gods who had auras as powerful as his!

The Xia Emperor sat up high in his throne, gazing down at his

subjects.

"We bow in respect to you, Imperial Majesty." Instantly, the five True Immortals and Empyrean Gods all bowed and called out.

"We bow in respect to you, Imperial Majesty." The more than ten thousand Celestial Immortals present all rose to their feet, bowing and calling out in unison.

The Xia Emperor sat atop his throne, staring down at his bowing subjects while feeling high-spirited. To have more than ten thousand Celestial Immortals bowing towards him...this was a first for even the Xia Emperor himself!

*Ananda was the cousin of the Buddha and one of his closest disciple. ↵
Amitabha is the name of a Buddha, the most important Buddha of the popular Pure Lands School. It is believed by many Buddhists, even in this very day, that saying his name will bring blessings. ↵*

Chapter 3 – Xingtian, Heaven Punisher

When the Grand Xia had been unified, all of the Immortals and Gods had come to pay their respects...but that was after countless years of wars against the Fiendgods, resulting in catastrophic casualties. Very few Celestial Immortals were alive after those wars. Now that the Grand Xia had been at peace for so many eons, the total number of Celestial Immortals within the Grand Xia had reached astonishing heights.

“This is a tribulation like none we have ever faced before. I wonder... how many of them will be alive at its conclusion?” The Xia Emperor stared downwards, sighing privately to himself. “I’m not even sure if I myself will survive...”

“Arise,” the Xia Emperor said aloud. “Take your seats.”

Ji Ning and the others all took their seats. Immortal fruit and nectars were placed in front of them, but none of the Immortals were in the mood for food. They were all waiting to hear the Xia Emperor’s words.

“Junior apprentice-brother, look; it seems as though the Dongyan Forefather is amongst those five True Immortals up there,” Yu Wei suddenly sent.

“The Dongyan Forefather?!” Ning was shocked, immediately looking over.

Indeed.

Amongst the group of five, there was a man dressed in plain blue robes. He looked quite ordinary, but his aura was that of a True Immortal.

The Dongyan Forefather was the pillar that held up the skies for the Dongyan clan! Ninelotus was now the current clan leader for the Dongyan clan, and during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, Ning

had personally seen the Dongyan Forefather. However, back then he had merely been a Celestial Immortal. Who would've thought that when upon his next appearance, he was a Pure Yang True Immortal?

Ning suddenly thought of what his master, Subhuti, had told him. He couldn't help but sigh to himself. "The world of the Grand Xia truly is a world of crouching tigers and hidden dragons."

"My many fellow Immortal..." The Xia Emperor finally spoke out.

Instantly, everyone looked at him. Ning no longer pondered on the Dongyan clan, also focusing on the Xia Emperor's words.

"I trust all of you, fellow Immortals, know what our current situation is like." The black-robed Xia Emperor's voice was very somber. The Seamless Gate has summoned a storm that is sweeping through the entire Grand Xia. By now, hundreds of the weaker major worlds of the Three Realms have already been fully subjugated by them. In addition to those, more than a thousand major worlds have been embroiled by the flames of war...and our Grand Xia has also become embroiled into a war against the Seamless Gate."

Everyone felt heaviness in their hearts.

Hundreds of major worlds had already been subjugated? They hadn't know this previously, before the Xia Emperor announced it. It must be understood that the Three Realms only had three thousand major worlds to begin with; as for the trillion minor worlds, they were far, far weaker. Any clan or school could easily take over a minor world, which was why in the short run it didn't really matter who the minor worlds belonged to. The major worlds were the places where both sides were fighting!

"The Seamless Gate is indeed powerful." The Xia Emperor nodded. "If we were weak and divided like a pile of loose sand, we would've been broken apart and defeated individually by them long ago."

"However...we are unified!" The Xia Emperor's eyes flashed with

divine light. "The Seamless Gate's power is unfathomable, but we have the many Daofathers and Buddhas of the Daoist Path and Buddhist Sangha behind us, as well as the many True Gods who were born from the primordial chaos and many other major powers with unbelievable might. Our power is great as well! If the Seamless Gate was capable of completely suppressing us with force, they would've swept through and taken over the Three Realms long ago. They wouldn't have settled upon their current plan of launching sneak attacks everywhere in such a cautious manner."

Everyone present nodded.

The reason why so many Celestial Immortals had come was because they were all quite confident in their side.

Their own alliance, after all, was an incredibly powerful one as well. They were also under the command of Daofather Crimsonbright, who was under the command of Mother Nuwa. So many major powers...they made up a force of utterly inconceivably terrifying might.

"In war, there is triage. Some places have to be abandoned, while some places must be protected," the Xia Emperor said. "Our power, although great, doesn't allow us to protect every single world of the three thousand major worlds. Thus, we have to abandon a few of those places, allowing us to concentrate our strength to protect the important worlds."

"And the Grand Xia...is one of the places we have to protect!" The Xia Emperor's voice carried a terrifying, combative will within it.

Everyone listening, however, felt uneasy.

Most likely, the Empyrean God and True Immortal rulers of the other conquered major worlds had said the same things to their subordinates...that their world 'had to be protected'. Otherwise, how could they have convinced their Celestial Immortals to fight for them?

The Xia Emperor swept his subjects with his gaze, understanding their concerns. He immediately said, "The karmic luck of our Grand Xia is one of the highest of all the three thousand major worlds of the Three Realms. In the face of a tribulation like this, the war over karmic luck is a critically important component. Even the loss of ten of those weaker major worlds wouldn't compare to our Grand Xia!"

Everyone below him nodded. This was definitely true!

"Thus...the Grand Xia absolutely not must be lost," the Xia Emperor said solemnly.

"In addition!"

"Our side already has eleven thousand Celestial Immortals and more than a million Loose Immortals!" The Xia Emperor continued, "I have spoken with multiple True Gods and Daofathers regarding how the Grand Xia shall defend against our foes."

The many Immortals all felt their hearts clench. Multiple True Gods and Daofathers? They all listened attentively.

Eleven thousand Celestial Immortals, more than a million Loose Immortals...although this figure was stunning, everyone had already guessed at it after seeing the veritable sea of Loose Immortals present.

"We have decided upon our plan," the Xia Emperor said. "Of the eleven thousand Celestial Immortals, two thousand will be under my direct command! The other nine thousand will be divided up into nine major armies, each of which will consist of a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals. Every single army will train in the 'Heaven Punisher Formation'. During the conference, True God Xingtian ¹ personally agreed to transmit this grand formation to me!"

"Xingtian the Heaven Punisher?"

Everyone revealed a look of shock and joy.

True God Xingtian was extremely famous in the Three Realms. He was a figure out of the oldest legends. Long ago, during the era of Pangu's World, Xingtian had been merely an Empyrean God, one of the mighty generals under the command of humanity's Primordial Imperial Clan. Early on during the Primordial Era, although humans were a very powerful race and the Human Emperor was acknowledged as a true Emperor, the thousands of other races were all quite powerful as well. The monsters, for example, were only slightly weaker than the humans. Thus, the major powers had all worked together to establish the Celestial Court. As for the Celestial Emperor, his job was to assure peace between the various parties, so as to ensure the safety and stability of the Primordial World.

Back then, the Human Emperor had been a truly dominating force. The Celestial Emperor, by contrast, was merely a mediator.

During that era, Xingtian had a quarrel with the Celestial Emperor, resulting in him launching a direct assault against the Celestial Court. Xingtian was a general of the imperial clan who was extremely skilled in battle. Although the Celestial Emperor had some Empyrean Gods and True Immortals by his side, they were unable to withstand Xingtian. In the end, the Celestial Emperor had been forced to go all-out and also invite other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to assist him before he had been able to suppress Xingtian. In the end, they actually managed to chop off Xingtian's head.

Now, as a Fiendgod, Xingtian naturally wouldn't die after having his head severed. However, Xingtian was an excessively proud person. Much like how Daoist Threelives had been unwilling to regrow his severed arm, Xingtian had been unwilling to regrow his head after it was cut off. Instead, he transformed his nipples into eyes and his bellybutton into his mouth.

Who would've thought that as a result of that wild battle, Xingtian would actually break through from being an Empyrean God to the True God level? He had instantly executed the Celestial Emperor.²

The Primordial Imperial Clan of humans had gained yet another True God; they were naturally delighted by this and were completely determined to protect Xingtian. The other major powers didn't quibble too much; after all, Xingtian had already become a True God, and that was that. They ended up just choosing a new Celestial Emperor.

True God Xingtian, a member of the Primordial Imperial Clan, had bestowed upon the Xia Emperor the 'Heaven Punisher Formation'; clearly, he was standing alongside the Xia Emperor as well.

The fact that the Xia Emperor had the Primordial Imperial Clan behind him was yet another reason why all of these Celestial Immortals were willing to risk their lives for him. The Primordial Imperial Clan was simply too strong! It had multiple major powers within its ranks, and the most ancient members, the Human Emperors, definitely were some of the most supreme figures of the Three Realms. The Human Emperors included many ancient figures, such as Suiren of the Flame and Shennong the Divine Farmer.³ Even the leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Way worked to befriend the human race; from this, one could tell how powerful the Primordial Imperial Clan of humans was.

"The Heaven Punisher Formation requires a commander, a thousand Celestial Immortals, and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals working in unison," the Xia Emperor said. "This enormous formation has the power to link into the energy of the natural world. The hundred thousand Loose Immortals serve as a powerful foundation that will pull in natural energy from an area of a million kilometers. The Celestial Immortals will guide them to use that energy to form a Xingtian Divinity which is so powerful that even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals will find hard to damage."

Ning and the others sighed in amazement upon hearing this.

What an incredible effort the Xia Emperor had made.

If the Loose Immortals all struck out without coordination without

guidance, they would be completely and effortlessly slaughtered. However, once a hundred thousand Loose Immortals activated the power of the natural world...they would be able to make a much larger difference. It wasn't hard for a single Loose Immortal to fully activate the natural energy for an area of ten thousand kilometers. A hundred thousand Loose Immortals could definitely activate all of the energy for an area of a million kilometers. So much natural energy...how terrifying that had to be! Not even Empyrean Gods or True Immortals were at such a ridiculous level of power!

But of course, although the Loose Immortals could activate the energy, they wouldn't be able to control it. Thus, a thousand Celestial Immortals were needed to provide guidance and to mobilize that energy, serving as the skeleton and spine...and of course, a commander was needed to serve as the head, in charge of everything. Only then could the power of this mighty Heaven Punisher Formation be unleashed.

"I will transmit to all the Loose Immortals the basic fundaments of the Heaven Punisher Formation," the Xia Emperor said. "But of course, I'll leave out the most important parts of it."

"I'll choose the commanders of the nine armies from the eleven thousand of you." The Xia Emperor looked downwards, and instantly everyone below him began to murmur. To command a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals...who wouldn't be willing to accept such an honor? All of them wanted to be commanders, not soldiers. They had thought that the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would take up those positions; who would've thought that the Xia Emperor would choose from the Celestial Immortals?

"The most important part of the Heaven Punisher Formation is the activation of natural energy by the Loose Immortals; an Empyrean God or True God leading it wouldn't actually add that much power to it," the Xia Emperor said. "Thus, I'm choosing from the Celestial Immortals. As for the True Gods and Empyrean Gods...at critical

moments, they'll help you out and deal heavy blows to the Seamless Gate."

"I'll give you all half a month," the Xia Emperor said. "During this period of time, you are to fully learn and understand the Heaven Punisher Formation, and you'll have a chance to fight for the opportunity to become a commander."

"When the time comes, I'll send out a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals and give every contestant a chance to try to command them in a formation," the Xia Emperor said. "The nine Celestial Immortals who control the formation with the greatest amount of skill and allow it to unleash the most power will become the nine commanders."

Upon hearing his words, Ning and the others all felt persuaded.

To let those who were able to unleash the most power from the formation become the commanders was quite fair.

"The nine final commanders shall be taught the most important aspects of the Heaven Punisher Formation," the Xia Emperor said. "Without those parts, the formation can still be used, but the power will only be comparable to some other ancient formations. With those important parts...the power will be increased tens of times over."

This formation was a secret of the Primordial Imperial Clan; the important parts to it naturally could not be taught to just anyone and everyone.

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One bamboo slip after another was delivered to the tables of the Celestial Immortals. The many Celestial Immortals all pored their coresense into the bamboo slips, easily acquiring the Heaven Punisher Formation. But of course, actually learning it would require some time.

"Everyone, you will only have half a month. When the time ends, only those who have already fully learned the Heaven Punisher Formation will have a chance to fight over the commander positions," the Xia Emperor said. "Alright, everyone...hurry up and learn the Heaven Punisher Formation!"

That night.

A million Loose Immortals were at the plaza below the Skylight Palace, all seated in the lotus position as they focused on learning the basics of the Heaven Punisher Formation.

As for the many Celestial Immortals, they remained at the main hall of the Skylight Palace. They, too, sat in the lotus position as they meditated on the Heaven Punisher Formation. Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Celestial Immortal Unity, Immortal Diancai...all of them quietly sat there, meditating.

Xingtian means Heaven Punisher, much like how Xuanwu refers to the Turtle-Snake ↵ This entire story is very close to the actual Chinese legend of Xingtian, except in the legends, it was Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor and the forefather of Chinese civilization, who defeated and severed Xingtian's head. The real story, however, ended at the part with Xingtian regrowing his eyes and mouth. ↵

These two figures are extremely ancient Chinese deities/demigods; Suiren is credited for having invented/discovered fire, while Shennong is credited for having taught medicine and farming to humans. ↵

Chapter 4 – No Seam Left Untouched

In the blink of an eye, nine days passed.

The more than ten thousand Celestial Immortals remained seated in the lotus position within the main hall of the Skylight Palace. Around each of them hovered bloody runic seals. The same was true for Ji Ning; there were many bloody runes swirling around him, each of which contained a shocking battle-intent. However, it seemed as though those runes were lacking in something. They continuously circled around Ning...and finally, after Ning manifested yet another rune, all of the bloody runes connected to each other, forming a complete whole as their warlike aura skyrocketed in power.

“Success.” Ning opened his eyes, looking at the hovering runes. “This Heaven Punisher Formation is truly mysterious and profound; it actually took me nine full days. However, it truly is a grand formation that is perfectly suited for combination attacks; it truly lives up to its reputation as a formation created by True God Xingtian, known as the Primordial Wargod.”

Xingtian was often referred to as the Primordial Wargod. He delighted in battle. When he made his breakthrough to become a True God, it was when his head had been chopped off and he had transformed his nipples into eyes and his belly button into his mouth, then continued to fight. From this, one could tell how savage and how warlike Xingtian was.

“Eh?”

Ning looked at his surroundings. Immortal Diancai and Yu Wei were both meditating, but Celestial Immortal Unity’s seat was empty.

“Unity has already mastered it?” Ning rose to his feet as well. The Skylight Palace was currently quite silent; everyone was busy meditating. As for the Xia Emperor and the other five True Immortals and Empyrean Gods, they had left for now; the Xia Emperor and the

others couldn't just sit there and do nothing for half a month, after all. Ning moved towards the outside of the main palace, soon seeing the Celestial Immortals floating on the clouds outside, chatting and laughing amongst themselves. Ning saw a total of sixty individuals; apparently, these were the ones who had succeeded in learning the technique.

If one had a very high level of comprehension abilities, one would be capable of learning the Heaven Punisher Formation. But of course, if one had a very high level of insight into the Dao or an extremely deep level of insight into formations, one could also learn it in an incredibly short period of time.

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth."

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth mastered it as well?"

"The reason why we were able to learn it so quickly was because we've lived for trillions of years. Fellow Daoist Darknorth's comprehension abilities are truly staggering," the other Celestial Immortals laughed and praised.

Ning smiled in acknowledgment. These sixty Celestial Immortals were elites; in fact, quite a few were comparable to Celestial Immortal Unity.

"Ji Ning." Unity walked over as well. "I just finished learning it a short while ago; you were just a hair slower than me. It seems you'll be one of my major foes when it comes to competing for the commander positions."

"Don't praise me, fellow Daoist Unity." Ning shook his head. "The world of the Grand Xia is filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons; it won't be easy to rank in the top nine out of more than ten thousand Celestial Immortals. Oh, right; there's something I need to speak to the Xia Emperor about."

"Go." Unity nodded.

Ning immediately walked towards a nearby attendant, asking him to carry a message for him.

"I'll go notify the Xia Emperor right away. Immortal Darknorth, please wait a moment." The attendant immediately departed to go report to the Xia Emperor.

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A side palace.

The Xia Emperor was seated by himself before a table that was covered with a map of the entire Grand Xia. The Xia Emperor was staring intently at the map as the black-robed Ning walked in.

"There you are." The Xia Emperor raised his head.

"Respectful greetings to you, Imperial Majesty." Ning bowed.

"No need to stand on such ceremony in private," the Xia Emperor said with a laugh. "You asked to see me in private; is there something you need?"

Ning immediately said, "Ji Ning has a boon to request, Imperial Majesty."

"Speak," the Xia Emperor said.

Ning said, "Ji Ning knows that the Three Realms are currently in a state of chaos, and so all Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals must take part in the battle. However...I would like to ask you, your Imperial Majesty, to help me and allow my Dao-companion, Yu Wei, to refrain from taking part in battle."

"Refrain from taking part in battle? But..." The Xia Emperor frowned. "Why?"

"My Dao-companion is pregnant," Ning explained. "If she takes too heavy a blow during a battle...she might be able to recover, as a

Celestial Immortal, but the baby in her body might..."

The Xia Emperor instantly laughed. "So the Rainbowflame Fairy is pregnant? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Very few people know about it; after all, it's just a pregnancy," Ning said. Ning hadn't made a big fuss about this, primarily because he was worried that others would take aim at Yu Wei. Thus, only the closest people to them knew about this matter. However, after Ning's Primaltwin's tribulation, his master Subhuti had told him that so long as he told a second person about his secrets, there was a chance the Seamless Gate would find out. Thus, Ning understood that most likely the Seamless Gate already knew about Yu Wei's pregnancy; this naturally made him feel even more cautious.

"Don't worry. Since she's pregnant, we naturally won't ask the Rainbowflame Fairy to take part in battle," the Xia Emperor said. "However...after she finishes giving birth, she still has to take part in the war. No one can easily escape the flames of war."

"I understand." Ning nodded.

Right at this moment, someone came in from outside.

As though sensing the person, Ning glanced backwards. He immediately said, "Respectful greetings to you, senior Dongyan." The newcomer was True Immortal Dongyan.

True Immortal Dongyan laughed. "I heard, Ji Ning, that you had woken up from your meditations, and so I wanted to chat with you. I didn't expect you to be here with his Imperial Majesty."

"Might I ask what you wish of me, senior?" Ning asked.

"I simply wish to ask you to help me with something," True Immortal Dongyan said.

"Help you?" Ning was surprised. "Senior, you are far more powerful than me."

True Immortal Dongyan shook his head. "What use is that? In the face of this great storm, even major powers might fall. I was thinking...in the event of my death, I would like to ask you, Ji Ning, to help me out a little in taking care of and protecting Ninelotus. You don't have to personally watch over her and protect her, just...help arrange for her protection. All I ask is that she be able to stay alive and safe."

Ning was startled. Ninelotus?

Ning had severed his relationship with Ninelotus long ago. However...within the demonheart world, the two of them had been together for thirty thousand years. This had a significant impact on Ning.

"If I have the power to protect her, I naturally will. Ninelotus is my senior apprentice-sister, after all," Ning said.

"All I need are these words from you, Ji Ning." True Immortal Dongyan sighed.

"Dongyan, you are far too cautious," the Xia Emperor said. "You became a Pure Yang True Immortal long ago, but always misguided others about it through your Primaltwin. Now that the storm has come and you are unable to avoid it, you've already sent all of your clansmen to your master's place...and yet, you still want to ask Ji Ning to help out as well?"

Ning was instantly surprised by these words. So the real Dongyan Forefather had become a Pure Yang True Immortal long ago. The Celestial Immortal everyone had met...had merely been a Primaltwin?

"If one's power is revealed, then one will die all the quicker when the storm comes." True Immortal Dongyan shook his head. "Right, Xiamang. Of the eleven thousand Celestial Immortals...I imagine some are traitors for the Seamless Gate. If a traitor becomes one of the nine commanders..."

Ning nodded, looking towards the Xia Emperor as well.

"Of course there are traitors. That's obvious...but what can you do about it?" The Xia Emperor shook his head. "The traitors are far too hard to discern; they can even swear oaths to the Dao of the Heavens without being punished for breaking them. Many have made it all the way to the sides of our Daofathers. I imagine that the traitors we've uncovered only make up a small portion of all the traitors."

"They've made it to the sides of our Daofathers? They won't be punished for violating oaths to the Dao of the Heavens?" Ning was shocked.

The Xia Emperor looked towards Ning, then nodded. "Right. You are still quite weak; your main goal right now is to train to prepare for the Empyrean Tribulation and become an Empyrean God. Thus, there are many things which your master has probably not informed you about. Once you do become an Empyrean God, you'll know all these things. The Seamless Gate...their abilities are beyond what you can imagine. The Seamless Gate, the Seamless Gate...in terms of their intelligence abilities and their infiltrating abilities...they truly do leave no seam untouched!"

Ning shivered. Puzzled, he asked, "But why is it that they can violate oaths to the Dao of the Heavens? That makes no sense."

"Why doesn't it make sense? Daofathers have all mastered Heavenly Daos and are in control of them; oaths to the Dao of the Heavens are useless when made by them," the Xia Emperor said. "Since oaths to the Dao of the Heavens are useless when made by Daofathers... naturally, there are others for whom they are useless as well. However, not just anyone is capable of this...but clearly, the Seamless Gate is!"

"They are able to know of every single Celestial Tribulation."

"They are able to ignore oaths to the Dao of the Heavens."

"They even number amongst their ranks disciples of the leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Sangha!" The Xia Emperor sighed. "The two leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Sangha possess unfathomable abilities; they were able to detect some flaws and identify some traitors. However...those ones they found most likely only make up a tiny fraction of the total number of traitors."

The Xia Emperor sighed again. "Thus...this is a true 'tribulation' for the Three Realms!"

Ning nodded.

Right.

Even people like his master, Subhuti, were behaving with the utmost caution. The Seamless Gate...it was far too mysterious, and its abilities were far too unfathomable. In fact, Ning had the feeling that it was as though the Seamless Gate was in control of the laws of Heaven and Earth! They were able to locate any Celestial Tribulation, and oaths to the Dao of the Heavens was useless to them...

"I will naturally be very, very cautious in choosing the nine commanders," the Xia Emperor said. "No matter what, I cannot let one of those positions enter the hands of a traitor. However... although there might be a few traitors amongst the eleven thousand, the chances of one of them becoming the top nine are quite low. I'll be extremely careful in my investigations, and if I detect anything out-of-place at all, I'll immediately apprehend them."

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Soon, the fifteen days given to the Celestial Immortals to meditate on the Heaven Punisher Formation came to an end.

The Skylight Palace. The main hall.

The Xia Emperor was seated high up on his throne, staring down at his subjects. Smiling, he said, "Fellow Immortals, the fifteen days have passed. I trust that you have all mastered at least the 'advanced

scroll' of the Heaven Punisher Formation."

All the Celestial Immortals present laughed.

The Heaven Punisher Formation was divided into the 'basic' level, the 'advanced' level, and the 'complete' level.

The basic level was for Loose Immortals to learn. It was very simple, and even Loose Immortals would only need a single day to learn it.

Learning the 'advanced' level was a bit tougher, but for Celestial Immortals...even the slowest of them would only need two days to master it.

Mastering the complete Heaven Punisher Formation, however, was thousands of times more difficult.

"Those of you who have mastered the complete Heaven Punisher Formation, come to the center of the palace," the Xia Emperor said.

One person after another began to rise to their feet.

Ji Ning and Celestial Immortal Unity rose to their feet as well, walking to the center. An entire group of Celestial Immortals now stood at the heart of the palace.

"A total of 359." The Xia Emperor laughed. "If there was one more, we would have a perfect 360 degree circle. Still...perfection is rare in this world. My 359 fellow Immortals...I'd like to ask you to make your preparations now. In two hours, I will have each of you attempt to command a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals in assuming the Heaven Punisher Formation. I'll test the power of the Heaven Punisher Formations you command, and the most powerful nine will become the nine commanders."

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A short while later.

The imperial plaza below the palace. More than a million Loose Immortals were gathered here; one truly could see no end to them.

By now, the Loose Immortals had all parted, allowing for an empty area with a circumference of a thousand kilometers appear amongst them. At the edges around this empty area, there stood more than eleven thousand Celestial Immortals as well as the Xia Emperor.

“One thousand Celestial Immortals, a hundred thousand Loose Immortals, enter the field!” The Xia Emperor ordered.

The pre-selected Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals flew into the empty field in an awe-inspiring manner.

“Fellow Immortal Northstar shall be the first one,” the Xia Emperor said.

Celestial Immortal Northstar immediately said respectfully, “Yes.” He stepped into the empty region, and as he did, a blurry aura of light instantly covered the field, forming into an enormous grand sealing formation.

Chapter 5 – Chaos Goldstone

The Xia Emperor and the million Loose Immortals watched from outside the grand sealing formation.

Within the formation, this quite famous Immortal Northstar, dressed in stellar Daoist robes, gave an order to the thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals next to him: "I'll have to trouble you all, fellow Daoists...assemble the formation!"

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!!! A thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals all flew into the air in unison. When the Xia Emperor had selected them, he had also assigned them each a location within the grand formation. In truth, it was quite simple; each Celestial Immortal controlled a hundred Loose Immortals, who would do whatever the Celestial Immortal ordered. The thousand Celestial Immortals, in turn, followed the lead of Immortal Northstar; thus, the Heaven Punisher Formation was quite stable.

The Immortals all hovered there in midair...and then bloody runes began to emerge from their bodies, causing a shockingly powerful warlike aura to emerge.

BOOM!

A blood-red aura suddenly burst out of the grand sealing formation, but it didn't damage it in the slightest.

Countless lines of bloody red light began to converge, merging together to form a dark-red giant.

And then...the colors of the world seemed to change!

An enormous whirlpool appeared in the air above the entire imperial capital. It spread more than a million kilometers, ravenously drawing in all of the surrounding natural energy. In almost the blink of an eye, a completely void of a million kilometers was created; all of the

energy in that region had been drawn into the sealing formation, into the blurry giant's body. Instantly, the blurry form of the giant began to stabilize.

The giant was thirty thousand meters tall, and he looked like he had an absolutely enormous head, as well as a pair of muscular arms and powerful legs! However...if one took a careful look, one would see that the massive head was actually the giant's entire upper torso! The nipples were the eyes, while the belly button was the mouth. The entire upper body was like a giant, savage, snarling face that had a vague resemblance to Celestial Immortal Northstar's.

"So this is Xingtian, the Heaven Punisher?"

Ning and the others all sighed in amazement.

A thousand and one Celestial Immortals, along with a hundred thousand Loose Immortals, were all located within the body of this Heaven Punisher. The enormous Heaven Punisher, formed from the energy of the surrounding area, had an aura of such power that it surpassed the aura of most Empyrean Gods and True Immortals.

"It looks strong, but it's power is rather hollow," Celestial Immortal Unity evaluated. "Clearly, the enormous amount of natural energy hasn't been applied perfectly; a bit is leaking out."

"To be able to perfectly control such an enormous amount of natural energy is too difficult. Even the most powerful of Celestial Immortals can only do their best." Ning could see and sense how massive this concentration of power was. If someone was capable of controlling all of this power with absolute perfection...even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would have no choice but to flee in the face of it! Alas, even a Pure Yang True Immortal controlling the formation wouldn't be able to perfectly control it.

"Fellow Immortal Northstar."

The Xia Emperor, located outside the formation, spoke out.

Swish.

A white-robed Xia Emperor appeared out of nowhere. The white-robed Xia Emperor walked towards the grand sealing formation, which didn't impede him in the slightest, allowing him to enter.

"Imperial Majesty."

The massive Northstar Heaven Punisher called out respectfully to him.

The Heaven Punisher's entire body was dark-red. He was only clad in furs which covered his waist and his groin. A blood-red aura radiated from his entire massive body; it was the manifestation of his warlike intent, made corporeal.

"First familiarize yourself a bit first," the white-robed Xia Emperor said.

"Yes," the Northstar Heaven Punisher said respectfully. Natural energy continued to ripple over the body of the massive Heaven Punisher, slowly stabilizing as the Heaven Punisher's form grew more solid. The aura emanating from it, however, actually shrank considerably...but then, everything came to a halt. Clearly, this Heaven Punisher was unable to strengthen any further.

The white-robed Xia Emperor nodded. "Prepare." He waved his hand, and an enormous pile of black rocks suddenly appeared, stacked up on each other in neat layers like a small mountain. However, hints of golden light could be seen from within the black rocks, causing them to have a mysterious aura.

"This is chaos goldstone," the white-robed Xia Emperor said. "There are a total of ten pieces piled up here. Use your full power to chop down upon the stones here with your palm. The more power your Heaven Punisher is able to split open, the more stones you will be able to split open. The other fellow Immortals who command the Heaven Punisher Formation will also be assigned the task of splitting

these stones open."

"Chaos goldstones? But we haven't been taught the critical components to the Heaven Punisher Formation yet; will we be able to break them open?" Celestial Immortal Unity, located outside the formation, was a bit worried now.

"Hard to say." Ning wasn't certain either.

He naturally knew a bit about chaos goldstones. The Fifth Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand] required many Five Elements treasures, and chaos goldstones could be used to satisfy the 'metal' element requirements.

True Gods and Daofathers harvested them from the infinite primordial chaos. They were incredibly tough, and generally speaking only Empyrean Gods or True Immortals were capable of damaging them. For Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, the value of chaos goldstones lay in the fact that if one refined them, one would be able to extract chaos gold essence from them. The stones were completely black, but their surface glimmered with faint dots of golden light. These dots of golden light were 'chaos gold essence'.

These ten enormous pieces of chaos goldstone, nearly three thousand meters long...if one refined and smelted them, the amount of chaos gold essence that would be produced would most likely be the size of a human fingernail.

Chaos gold essence was something which even True Gods and Daofathers would find hard to damage. It could only be used in smelting and forging if one had very special forging equipment and special techniques to melt them. They were truly top-grade ingredients, generally used in the most top-grade of Pure Yang artifacts. If one mixed in just a little chaos gold essence into those artifacts, they would become nigh indestructible.

"Begin," the white-robed Xia Emperor ordered.

A million Immortals outside the formation watched as the Northstar Heaven Punisher raised his enormous palm. That massive palm was like a giant axe, the edge becoming the axe-blade as it chopped straight downwards! Ripples in space appeared in the area around his palm, pushing out in two opposite directions. However, his power was clearly still being held back; otherwise, space would've been torn apart long ago.

BOOM!

The enormous palm hacked straight down against the ten massive pieces of chaos goldstone. Instantly, the entire imperial plaza trembled. However, since this was the most stable and secure location in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, it wasn't damaged in the slightest.

"How'd he do?"

"He broke it."

"He broke it!"

"He seems to have broken four pieces!"

The million Immortals stared, all sighing in disbelief.

To be able to shatter four pieces of chaos goldstone, despite how tough they were...it could be said that even without knowing the critical parts to the formation, the Northstar Heaven Punisher was definitely at the power level of an Empyrean God or True Immortal. Ning had to admit; this Heaven Punisher was considerably stronger than his own true body, which had just barely reached the minimum level of power for Empyrean Gods or True Immortals. And this was without knowing the most important parts to the formation!

"Four pieces shattered, some damage to the fifth piece." The white-robed Xia Emperor nodded. "Alright. Next shall be fellow Immortal Alltruth."

The grand sealing formation was temporarily dispelled.

The Heaven Punisher Formation disassembled. The hundred thousand Loose Immortals and one thousand and one Celestial Immortals all appeared. Celestial Immortal Northstar first bowed towards the white-robed Xia Emperor, then walked out of the grand sealing formation. As he did, a tall, skinny, ashen-faced elder walked into the formation.

.....

Each of the 359 Celestial Immortals had a chance to test themselves.

The first testee, Celestial Immortal Northstar, was actually quite formidable; most of those who came after him were only able to break three pieces.

“Fellow Immortal Unity.” The white-robed Xia Emperor glanced outside.

“I’m going to give it a try.” Unity gave Ning a smile, then walked towards the grand sealing formation.

Ning watched closely.

Unity was the 192nd testee. The most powerful Celestial Immortal to date had, amazingly enough, been able to shatter six pieces of chaos goldstone. She was a female Immortal, Celestial Immortal Rainsoar of the Skyfarmer clan. She was a tremendously famous pill-refining expert, but she wasn’t particularly well-known for her combat abilities. And yet, till now she was the most powerful person to be tested.

“I wonder how Celestial Immortal Unity will do?” Yu Wei wondered.

“Senior Unity’s power is formidable,” Ning said. “I trust his results shall be extraordinary.”

Rumble...

A Heaven Punisher once more took form within the formation.

After familiarizing himself with the technique, the Unity Heaven Punisher was given the nod by the white-robed Xia Emperor. He, too, lifted up his massive right palm, then hacked downwards towards the pile of chaos goldstone.

BOOM! Yet another, now-familiar exploding sound. By now, most likely all of the dwellers within the imperial capital of the grand Xia had gotten used to this sort of explosion...because there had been nearly two hundred of them by now.

Ning took a careful look, only to see that only four pieces of the ten chaos goldstones remained undamaged.

"Six pieces!" Ning called out in delight.

"He truly is formidable. He's comparable to Celestial Immortal Rainsoar." Yu Wei was surprised and delighted as well.

"Truly formidable. Impressive!" Immortal Diancai was excited as well. There were so many Celestial Immortals here, quite a few of whom were almost as powerful as Pure Yang True Immortals. However, it truly was hard to say which of them would be able to unleash the most power from the Heaven Punisher Formation.

The million Immortals all sighed in praise as well.

Within the formation, the white-robed Xia Emperor nodded. "Six shattered pieces, with the seventh piece slightly damaged. You are very close to fellow Immortal Rainsoar; you are just a tiny bit weaker. You rank second amongst the 192 fellow Immortals who have tested so far."

The formation dispersed, allowing Celestial Immortal Unity to fly out. A look of delight was in his eyes.

To rank second amongst 192 Celestial Immortals meant that he had a very good chance of ranking in the top nine of the 359 total

Celestial Immortals. But of course, it was also possible that he was just unlucky, and that the later figures would all be incredibly powerful. If that was the case, there was nothing he could do.

One Celestial Immortal after another went forward as the tests continued.

"Why isn't it your turn yet, junior apprentice-brother?" Yu Wei was getting a bit impatient.

"No rush. There will always be some who come first and some who come later," Ning said. The Xia Emperor most likely had a very high opinion of Ning, which was why he had put Ning towards the rear, as part of a grand finale.

By now, more than three hundred Celestial Immortals had made their tests. A total of five Celestial Immortals had shattered six pieces of chaos goldstone!

"Fellow Immortal Ji Ning, please step forward," the white-robed Xia Emperor said.

"Ji Ning?"

"Ji Ning is up."

"Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning? Supposedly, his true body was, at the Void level, capable of resisting nine mighty Celestial Immortals by himself. He's the disciple of a Daofather...and by the looks of it, his Primaltwin has overcome the tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal."

"I was actually watching Ji Ning during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. He truly is a monstrously talented genius. However...fellow Doaist Ji Ning has trained for a fairly short period of time. I don't know if he's capable of controlling this Heaven Punisher Formation well or not." The plaza was immediately filled with discussions regarding Ning; after all, Ning was quite well known amongst the ten thousand-plus Celestial Immortals. As they saw it, perhaps Ji Ning

wasn't particularly strong right now, but in the future he would probably surpass them.

.....

Within the formation.

"Fellow Daoists, thank you for your help," Ning said towards the thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals.

"Assemble the formation."

Ning immediately soared upwards, flying into the air as a thousand Celestial Immortals followed him, scattering all around him. As for the hundred thousand Loose Immortals, they in turn followed their respective Celestial Immortal leaders. An enormous number of bloody runes appeared, all of which began to gather together and form into a blurry, dark-red giant. The surrounding natural energy began to furiously flow towards them. An enormous, thirty thousand meter tall Heaven Punisher quickly took shape, one whose face was rather similar to Ning's.

"This feeling...such tremendous power..." Ning sighed in amazement.

The flood of power flowing through him was beyond what he could truly control. All he could do was to try and control it as best he could.

"Fellow Immortal Ji Ning, familiarize yourself with it first." The white-robed Xia Emperor smiled.

Chapter 6 – Becoming Generals

Every Loose Immortal was very weak, but the amount of natural energy a hundred thousand Loose Immortals could summon...finally, Ji Ning had a taste of it for himself. Even though a thousand Celestial Immortals were guiding and taming the energy, making it so that it wasn't too unruly or chaotic, Ning still could sense how tough it would be to control it.

"Controlling the power of the Heaven Punisher Formation is like controlling the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]." Ning sighed.

The [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]...the more Immortal swords one used, the more difficult it was to control the formation.

This was especially true now that Ning used nine top-grade Pure Yang flying swords, the Ananda World-Swords, as the heart of his [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]. Although his heartforce was incredibly powerful, which was of use to him in controlling these magic treasures...Ning was still only able to just barely activate the first level of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]!

The main reason for this was that those nine Ananda World-Swords were simply far, far too powerful. It must be understood that not even most Pure Yang True Immortals would be lucky enough to acquire such a complete set of top-grade Pure Yang swords. Thus, one could imagine how hard it was to control them! The only reason why Ning was able to do so despite being merely at the Celestial Immortal level was because his heartforce had reached the third stage, 'ruler'.

Although Ning hadn't yet learned the way to apply heartforce to his soul, the more powerful one's heartforce was, the more flying swords one could control. This was similar to an unskilled strongman wielding a sword; the stronger he was, the heavier his sword could be. The application of heartforce to the soul was like a matter of technique; with the proper technique, the strongman would be able

to wield even heavier swords, while also allowing the power of his sword-arts to explosively increase.

This was the difference a good technique could make.

Right now, Ning was completely relying on his heartforce to brute-force things for him.

Whooooosh. A flood of energy circulated throughout the Heaven Punisher as Ning took control over it.

He slowly grew familiar with its power and gained experience with it.

In truth, it really wasn't that different from controlling one of his sword-formations.

.....

The white-robed Xia Emperor put away the earlier, shattered chaos goldstones, then placed ten more undamaged pieces on the ground. The chaos goldstones all glimmered with golden light, filled with beauty and magnetism.

"You can begin." After watching Ning familiarize himself for a few moments, the white-robed Xia Emperor gave the order.

Rumble...

The Darknorth Heaven Punisher took a single step forward, lifting up his thick, powerful right arm. The attention of the million-plus Immortals located outside the formation was all focused on this massive arm, many thousands of meters long.

Rumble...

The enormous palm hacked down like a massive greataxe, chopping downwards with irresistible might.

It was like Pangu splitting open the cosmic egg of primordial chaos and establishing the universe. Spatial ripples appeared around the

palm, pushing out in two directions like waves.

The enormous, dark-red axe-hand carried awe-inspiring might as it chopped downwards like a hatchet towards the mountain of chaos goldstone.

BOOM!!!

An enormous collision, followed by a shockwave that blasted out in every direction. When the shockwave struck against the grand sealing formation, a series of booming sounds could be heard. When the million-plus Immortals outside the formation heard those sounds, they were all tremendously shocked.

“Such power.”

“This level of power...it’s definitely the strongest thus far.”

“This Ji Ning truly is extraordinary. Monster. What a monster!”

“I wonder how many pieces of chaos goldstone he broke apart?”

The Immortals all sighed in amazement. In their hearts, Ji Ning truly was a peerless monster. They had thought that he wouldn’t necessarily be that impressive in commanding the Heaven Punisher Formation, but who would’ve thought that he had most likely surpassed all of the Celestial Immortals who had come before him?

They all took a careful look.

The shockwaves dispersed. Only now could they see...that the mountain of chaos goldstone was an absolute mess. There were so many shattered pieces of stone that they couldn’t even tell how many were broken.

“Is that...eight pieces?”

“Maybe nine?”

The million-plus Immortals tried their best to discern how many

pieces there were, but found it hard because so many shattered bits of rocks were obstructing their view.

The white-robed Xia Emperor waved his hand, and instantly all of the shattered bits flew to one side, revealing a completely undamaged piece of chaos goldstone as well as a second piece that was covered with cracks.

“Eight pieces shattered, the ninth piece nearly completely shattered.” The white-robed Xia Emperor revealed a smile. “Fellow Immortal Ji Ning truly is formidable; you’ve already become number one amongst the 330 Immortals who have tested thus far.”

In his heart, the white-robed Xia Emperor sighed to himself. “Ji Ning truly is incredible. For Celestial Immortals, using the Heaven Punisher Formation to break six pieces of chaos goldstone should be their limit. Only an inconceivable monster like Ji Ning could release such extraordinary power.”

From six pieces to eight pieces...there was ‘only’ an increase of two pieces, true, but the power of the palm-blow was being ablated with each layer. This meant that Ning’s Heaven Punisher’s power was two entire levels above that of the other Heaven Punishers. This...was because of heartforce! His powerful heartforce allowed him to control more of the natural energy of Heaven and Earth. If he had fully mastered heartforce and applied it to his soul, he would’ve been able to control an even more astonishing amount of power.

Rumble...

The Darknorth Heaven Punisher completely vanished, revealing a thousand and one Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals. Ning immediately flew out then said with a smile, “Thank you, fellow Daoists.”

“Ji Ning,” the white-robed Xia Emperor laughed, “Unless something unexpected happens, you’ll be one of the nine generals. But of course...if nine of the remaining twenty-nine are more powerful than

you, then there's nothing for it."

"If that really is the case, it would be a blessing for our Grand Xia," Ning said.

The Xia Emperor laughed loudly, then said, "Alright. Next is fellow Immortal Dustfloat."

.....

The person who came after Ning, Immortal Dustfloat, actually startled everyone quite badly...because he was able to just barely succeed in smashing the seventh piece of chaos goldstone. This caused many Immortals to feel shocked; could it be that there really was a group of incredibly powerful Celestial Immortals located at the end, some of whom would surpass Ji Ning?

However...as time passed and the tests proceeded, they quickly saw that although the Xia Emperor had indeed arranged for some of the particularly famous and powerful Celestial Immortals to be placed towards the end, none of them were more powerful than Ji Ning. In fact, none of them were even as powerful as Celestial Immortal Dustfloat.

The trials for the 359 Celestial Immortals took a total of two days, ending by nightfall of the second day.

The ranking was:

- 1 - Celestial Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning
- 2 - Celestial Immortal Dustfloat
- 3 - Celestial Immortal Loachwater
- 4 - Celestial Immortal Rainsoar
- 5 - Celestial Immortal Allbeasts
- 6 - Celestial Immortal Unity
- 7 - Celestial Immortal Rainbow
- 8 - Celestial Immortal Thousand Needles
- 9 - Celestial Immortal Whacko

It was actually quite strange. Ning had shattered eight plates of chaos goldstone, while Celestial Immortal Dustfloat had shattered seven. The rest of the nine had shattered six pieces, while the tenth had shattered five pieces.

“These thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals shall be commanded by fellow Immortal Whacko; they shall be the ‘Whacko Army.’” The Xia Emperor began to assign responsibilities. Upon hearing the name, quite a few of Immortals were unable to control their laughter; this army’s name didn’t have any hint of an Immortal’s aura at all.

“These next thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals shall be commanded by fellow Immortal Thousand Needles; they shall be the Thousand Needles Army.”

.....

“These next thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals shall be commanded by fellow Immortal Darknorth; they shall be the Darknorth Army. Alright; the nine armies have been set. The remaining Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals shall be under my command,” the Xia Emperor said. “Nine generals, come with me. All other Immortals, you can go rest with your fellows in the same army.”

The Xia Emperor immediately flew away on a cloud towards the Skylight Palace.

The five True Immortals followed him, as did Ning and the rest of the nine.

Within a graceful hall inside the Skylight Palace.

“Sit, all of you.” The Xia Emperor sat down with a smile. Everyone else sat down as well.

The five True Immortals were naturally seated closest to the Xia Emperor. Next was Ji Ning and the rest of the nine, who seated

themselves in accordance with their ranking.

"These are the critical parts to the Heaven Punisher Formation. Hurry up and learn them. Meditate well." The Xia Emperor waved his hand, and instantly nine dark-red medallions flew towards Ning and the other eight. "True God Xingtian personally forged these, imprinting his technique within them."

These medallions were the size of a palm. They were dark red, and covered with a savage-looking diagram.

The nine medallions hovered in the air in front of Ning and the rest of the nine. They naturally reached out to grab them, then filled them with their coresense. Soon, they completely memorized all of the information contained within it.

"You can keep the medallions." The Xia Emperor sighed. "All of you have fearlessly volunteered to command my many Immortals to do battle against the Seamless Gate...if you manage to survive, you can use the medallion to go visit True God Xingtian, and pick a single technique of your choice from his Dao Repository. Alternately, you can choose any Pure Yang treasure or Protocosmic spirit-treasure from his treasury."

Ning remained quite calm, but the other Celestial Immortals began to feel the fires of desire blaze in their hearts. After all, none of them were a Daofather's disciple; there were many divine abilities and secret arts which they did not have access to.

"Meditate well," the Xia Emperor repeated, his gaze dark and gloomy. "I fear that not too long from now, the Seamless Gate will launch the war."

.....

The world of the Grand Xia. Whitepole Commandery was a very remote commandery. Generally speaking, the more remote a feof was, the larger in size it was.

It was nightfall.

An enormous, towering black citadel was hovering in the air above Whitepole City. The levitating black citadel was a full size larger than even Whitepole City itself. It was completely black, and around it hovered a large number of chains. These countless chains filled the space around it, seeming to lock the citadel here as an anchor kept a ship locked in place in the sea.

The walls of the black citadel were filled with many roving black-armored soldiers.

Within the citadel itself, there was a tightly-patrolled military headquarters, as well as some towering palaces.

The largest open area within the black citadel was covered with a veritable sea of Immortals, all seated in the lotus position. These were Loose Immortals, and one could see no end to them.

At the very front of the plaza, there were three enormous, fog-shrouded caverns that were three hundred meters tall. The dark cavern entrances led to a mysterious, terrifying location.

"It's said that those caves lead to the legendary 'Fifth World'."

"The Patriarch said that the Celestial Immortals within the Fifth World are numerous beyond measure. There's even many True Immortals and Empyrean Gods there. If the Fifth World released its full power, it would effortlessly wipe out the entire Grand Xia."

"So why don't they?"

"Supposedly, the Fifth World is battling against many major worlds right now."

The countless Loose Immortals were all secretly chatting with each other.

.....

Within the tallest tower of the levitating black citadel.

Thousands of Celestial Immortals were seated in the lotus position within this palace. Black, watery runes were emanating from their bodies as they quietly, calmly meditated and trained.

At the very front of this palace sat the Gatemaster of the Seamless Gate, Azurefox, as well as the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. There were a total of eight of them! The Seamless Gate alone had four, whereas the Myriad Demons Cavern and Bloodcloud Hall had thus far only produced their respective leaders, their other experts having yet to arrive. True Immortal Whitepole, a white-browed, icy-looking man, was also present, along with a black-robed, black-haired, red-eyed elder.

"After many years of subterfuge and decades of instigations...nearly three thousand Celestial Immortals of the Grand Xia have joined us," Gatemaster Azurefox said with a smile. "We now have three thousand more, while Xiamang has three thousand less; that means the balance has been shifted by six thousand. Our Seamless Gate is also gathering in some scattered pockets of power located throughout our other major worlds as well. Once these three thousand Celestial Immortals have mastered the True Art of 'Chaoswater', it will be time to launch the assault. Senior apprentice-brother Whitepole, we'll rely on your leadership."

"I've been waiting countless eons for this day," the white-browed True Immortal Whitepole said in a cold voice.

Chapter 7 – Crusading Against The Grand Xia

“In this campaign against the Grand Xia,” True Immortal Whitepole said coldly, “Everyone has tasks to accomplish. If someone makes a mistake...don’t blame me when I report it to Master!”

“Fellow Daoist Whitepole, don’t worry; the conquest of the Grand Xia is the most important mission we have been assigned,” the Cavemaster of the Myriad Demons Cave said. “None of us will slack off.”

“Fellow Daoist, don’t worry,” the Hallmaster of Bloodcloud Hall said with a merry smile as well.

“Senior apprentice-brother, just watch and see what we can do. We absolutely must conquer the Grand Xia!” Gatemaster Azurefox chimed in as well.

True Immortal Whitepole nodded lightly. “Good. Since Master has assigned me to lead the conquest of the Grand Xia...I truly do not wish to lose. I’m going to win this battle, even if it costs me my life.”

The other seven True Immortals/Empyrean Gods all exchanged glances, murmuring to themselves in secret.

True Immortal Whitepole was indeed very powerful...but he was excessively stubborn. The feud he had with the Xia Emperor wasn’t a small one, but it wasn’t a major one either. Generally speaking, Pure Yang True Immortals were broad-minded and would long ago forget about such a feud. True Immortal Whitepole, however, insisted on remembering it, and had even bided his time for so long. As soon as the Godking had whispered to him, he had been so narrow-minded and laser-focused on revenge that he had immediately joined the Godking. He had trained bitterly for countless years, and was now incredibly powerful. Although those in the outside world didn’t know exactly how powerful he was, Gatemaster Azurefox and the others did. In addition, this man had fortified Whitepole City to a nigh-

impregnable level, and was also extremely skilled in biding his time; he was indeed an excellent choice as commander.

The conquest of the Grand Xia was incredibly important, and so the Godking had assigned this mission to True Immortal Whitepole, ordering Gatemaster Azurefox, the Cavemaster, and the Hallmaster to act as his assistants.

.....

A world of fiery red flames.

Massive, towering figures were striding about on the surface of this world. Some of them were three thousand meters tall, while others were thirty thousand meters tall! Their appearances were all varied and different; some had eight arms, some had three heads, while some looked like beasts. They were all filled with massive, billowing amounts of divine power, using it to block the terrible heat of this world.

“Life really is wonderful these days,” a green-haired cyclopean giant said with a sigh as he sat there on the scorching ground. Although the scorching heat of the ground was causing his skin to crackle, he still had a look of contentment on his face.

“The Xia Emperor has imprisoned us for countless years, and has been torturing us all this time. Why has he stopped recently?” A nearby red-haired giant asked, puzzled.

Although the environment remained a terrible one, things were far better than they had been in the past.

The blazing heat, the lava-like ground...these were all minor matters. It must be understood that a few decades before this, each and every one of them regularly underwent torture that caused their bodies to break apart. Fortunately, however, their Fiendgod bodies were able to heal from it, but even so...it was a life worse than death.

Compared to that, life was currently quite comfortable indeed!

Rumble...

In the air above this world, a massive spatial hole suddenly appeared. From within the spatial hole emerged a muscular, black-robed human figure. It was the Xia Emperor.

Instantly, the countless Fiendgods within this vast area all raised their heads. All their gazes were focused upon the Xia Emperor.

“It’s the Xia Emperor.”

“Damn.”

“Why the hell have you come?”

“Xiamang, have you come to humiliate us some more?”

Countless furious roars rang out from throughout the land.

The black-robed Xia Emperor stood there in the air, staring down at the countless Fiendgods. Long ago, during the Fiendgod Era, the humans had won a great victory. Many ordinary cultivators believed the defeated Fiendgods to have been slain, but in reality, only a small number of them actually had; most had instead been imprisoned.

For example, the Youngflame clan had imprisoned some as well.

Once properly tamed, these Fiendgods would become loyal servants that would live for countless years; they had unlimited lifespans! Who would be willing to so casually kill such potentially useful servants?

The Xia Emperor and the others had relocated here from Pangu’s World, after all; they held enormous advantages over these local Fiendgods. At first, they had slowly and patiently collected and tamed the local Fiendgods, until one day the local Fiendgods had given birth to an Empyrean God. The humans hadn’t dared to be negligent, and so had joined forces to completely suppress the

Fiendgods.

A few top-tier clans had been given a few Fiendgods, but 99% of the captured Fiendgods had all been imprisoned by the Xia Emperor.

Countless years of torment had indeed caused a portion of the Fiendgods to submit; the four Void-level Fiendgods that guarded the imperial gates for the Xia Emperor were good examples! The unbowed Fiendgods, however, made up the vast majority...and the Empyrean God was one of them. And so, they had remained imprisoned here by the Xia Emperor for this entire period of time! Logically speaking, an Empyrean God would be considered a powerful expert of the Three Realms, and so Empyrean Gods would generally only be imprisoned for a short period of time; it was quite rare to see one be imprisoned for so long. Fortunately for the Xia Emperor, his status was quite special, and the Empyrean God in question hadn't had any backers, which was why the Xia Emperor had been able to keep him here for so long.

"XIAMANG!!!" A furious roar rang out.

A towering, mountain-like figure soared into the skies. The figure had long, unbound hair and radiated an aura of infinite cold. His eyes flashed with jade-green light, and his upper body was completely unclad; the only thing he wore was a fur loincloth. He stood there coldly in midair, staring angrily at the Xia Emperor. "Why have you come?"

One on one...not even he was a match for the Xia Emperor.

However, there was a veritable ocean of Fiendgods here, and yet... although logically speaking, their power should've been able to completely swamp the Xia Emperor, they were in a prison world that was actually a Protocosmic spirit-treasure. As the master of this treasure, the Xia Emperor didn't even have to fight against them; all he had to do was activate the might of the treasure, and all of the Fiendgods would suffer pain that would make them wish for death.

"Empyrean God Coldsavage, have you been enjoying life lately?" The black-robed Xia Emperor laughed calmly.

"Hmph." Empyrean God Coldsavage sneered. "These little fellows have enjoyed a few decades of comfort, and so they are all quite delighted. However, they've forgotten that we Fiendgods once flew through the vast world above. That vast world is our true world, our true land. You outsiders, you invaders, you took away our land, you killed our kinsmen, and you captured us and tortured us for the sake of making us become your servants and slaves."

Empyrean God Coldsavage's voice rang out throughout this fiery world.

"GWRAAAR!"

"Detestable Xia Emperor!"

"Die!"

Instantly, countless Fiendgods bellowed out in unison.

The Xia Emperor remained placid. Smiling, he shook his head: "You are wrong, ridiculously wrong. This isn't your land. Countless years ago, the only thing which existed was the primordial chaos. Pangu split it apart, establishing Heaven and Earth, resulting in the creation of the primordial Pangu's World. Afterwards, Mother Nuwa created a race using Pangu as the template; that race was us, the humans. We are the heirs to Pangu and Nuwa; naturally, we are meant to flourish! We humans rose to prominence in the Primordial Era, then became the true powers of Pangu's World! Afterwards, a storm came that caused the primordial world to shatter; only then arose the three thousand major worlds and the trillion minor worlds. And so, to be precise...even the world of the Grand Xia is nothing more than a tiny piece of the shattered Pangu's World."

"So you tell me...are humans the owners and masters of the Grand Xia? Or are you Fiendgods?" The black-robed Xia Emperor asked

calmly.

"We were born here and we grew up here. Naturally, we are the owners of this place!" Empyrean God Coldsavage roared angrily.

"Ours! Ours!"

"Damnable humans!"

Countless Fiendgods echoed in furious unison.

The black-robed Xia Emperor said calmly, "I can't be bothered to quibble with you about this. The victor becomes hailed as king, while the defeated are cursed as bandits. You have all been imprisoned here for countless years, never to see the light of day! But now, I'll give you a chance...if you are willing to serve me and labor on my behalf for a hundred thousand years, then after that period of time, I'll give you back your freedom!"

His voice rang out, echoing throughout this world.

"Freedom?"

The countless Fiendgods were all stunned.

They deeply desired freedom, but the Xia Emperor had never promised it to them a single time, despite having imprisoned them here for countless ages. Instead, he had always demanded that they become his eternal servants and slaves, which was why they had never assented. And in truth, during an ordinary era of peace, a hundred thousand years was an extremely short period of time; to have so many Fiendgods be servants for a mere hundred thousand years was pointless.

"Xia Emperor, are you deceiving us?" Empyrean God Coldsavage frowned.

"No." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "I can swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens."

"I imagine that after a hundred thousand years, you'll give us our 'freedom', then immediately slaughter us," Empyrean God Coldsavage said angrily. "Even if you don't...other humans will act against us."

The Xia Emperor laughed. "I told you, I'll give you your freedom. In fact, I can even promise that I will give you your own territory from within the land I control, allowing you to live peaceful lives there. So long as you do not revolt and do not act against humans, you'll be able to live there in peace."

Instantly, all the Fiendgods grew excited.

They knew exactly how powerful the humans were; after all, they had seen humanity's 'fist' and had tasted its formidableness.

"Just a hundred thousand years?" Empyrean God Coldsavage said.

"I can swear it on an oath to the Dao of the Heavens," the Xia Emperor said.

"Fine! Then I'll labor for you for a hundred thousand years." Coldsavage's eyes gleamed with light. A mere hundred millennia; they had already been imprisoned in this place for countless hundred millennia. For Fiendgods, such a period of time was indeed very brief. They merely had to temporarily endure being his servants, and then they would gain their eternal freedom. They wouldn't be so foolish as to refuse.

.....

And so, just like that, the Xia Emperor took a massive army of Fiendgods into his command. These were the Fiendgods that countless human clans had joined together to suppress....but of course, this vast army would only serve for a hundred thousand years.

"A hundred thousand years. I wonder how many of them will be alive, after the storm. If they manage to survive...I might as well grant them their freedom and let them live happy lives." The Xia Emperor

sighed to himself. "But I wonder...by then, will I be alive, or will I be dead?"

.....

The world of the Grand Xia. The black citadel levitating above Whitepole City.

This black citadel had been personally forged by a Daofather for the express purpose of serving as a headquarters for an army. The Nuwa Alliance referred to it as the 'Seamless City'.

In the main plaza of the Seamless City.

Countless Loose Immortals were gathered here, before the three massive black fog-shrouded caves that led to the Fifth World. A steady, unbroken stream of black-robed figures flew out from the cave, as well as the occasional blood-robed figure. They all had tremendously powerful auras; some of them were Loose Immortals, while a few had the auras of Celestial Immortals. This awe-inspiringly vast army caused all of the many Loose Immortals present to feel their hearts swell with fervor.

"The Seamless Gate is far too powerful."

"Even more Immortals are arriving."

"Joining the Seamless Gate was the right decision."

Within the most towering palace of the Seamless City.

"Fellow Daoist Whitepole, my forces have already assembled," the Hallmaster of Bloodcloud Hall said with a laugh. "Just now, the last of them have reached the Seamless City."

"Good."

The sword-shaped white eyebrows of True Immortal Whitepole danced upwards as he smiled. "Excellent. Junior apprentice-sister

Azurefox, have all three thousand Celestial Immortals finished learning the first scroll of the True Art of Chaoswater?"

"They all have." Gatemaster Azurefox nodded.

"Then it is time to mobilize the army and campaign against the Xia." True Immortal Whitepole rose to his feet. "Assemble the world-notifying formation; I am going to announce it to the world."

The other seven True Immortals/Empyrean Gods all rose as well.

.....

The world-notifying formation was set up. True Immortal Whitepole stood there in its center, staring coldly towards the vast, infinite Void. He immediately said in a sonorous voice, "The Xia Emperor is tyrannical and brutal, without the Dao. In the face of the storm...I, True Immortal Whitepole, now command an army of a million Immortals to follow the will of the Dao of the Heavens in campaigning against the Xia!"

True Immortal Whitepole's voice reverberated throughout the 3600 commanderies and four seas of the Grand Xia.

Mortals, beasts, Diremonsters, cultivators...

They all could hear this voice.

This was a voice that echoed throughout every inch of the vast Grand Xia!

It represented...that the curtains had been lifted upon a massive war between Immortals within the Grand Xia!

Chapter 8 – Eight Dragons Cloudcity

Within a side hall of the Skylight Palace.

The Xia Emperor, the five True Immortals/Empyrean Gods, and Ji Ning and the rest of the nine commanders were all present here. The nine had already learned the critical components to the Heaven Punisher Formation, and had immediately understood the secrets to the entire formation.

"So to unleash the full power of the Heaven Punisher Formation, one actually needs 810,000 Loose Immortals and 9000 Celestial Immortals led by one powerful expert. Only then does it reach maximum power, and will the Heaven Punisher reach its full, perfect power." Celestial Immortal Allbeasts stroked his thick beard, sighing in amazement. "Nine represents a limit. Nine by nine, eighty one...this truly is a perfect formation."

"Right."

"If 810,000 Loose Immortals and 9000 Celestial Immortals were under my command, then the power of this formation would definitely rise dramatically." Celestial Immortal Whacko revealed an eager look on his face as well.

The Xia Emperor, seated on his throne, just laughed. "Indeed, a perfect Heaven Punisher Formation does involve 810,000 Loose Immortals and 9000 Celestial Immortals under a single commander. A perfect formation would allow your Heaven Punishers to increase in power by one or two levels. However...forget about the perfect Heaven Punisher Formation, even the simplified one that only involves 100,000 Loose Immortals and 1000 Celestial Immortals summons more natural energy than you can handle. In addition, there's a limit to the number of Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals available to us; our Grand Xia would only be able to produce a single perfect Heaven Punisher, but we can make more than ten of the simple ones!"

Ji Ning and the others all nodded.

Right.

Actually, the difference in power between the simplified and the perfect Heaven Punishers wasn't that great; at most, the simplified ones would be at a disadvantage in a head-on battle. In a battle where one side was perfectly countered by the other, such as when a Ki Refiner was forced into close combat by a Fiendgod, the result would be a slaughter...but when two Fiendgods fought in close combat, and there was just a minor difference in power between the two, at most one would be able to suppress the other.

A slightly stronger Fiendgod, or ten slightly weaker Fiendgods? In a time of war...the Xia Emperor naturally knew which one to pick.

Suddenly...

A sonorous voice rang out, shaking the world and transmitting straight into the Skylight Palace. Or perhaps it could be said that this voice shook every single inch of this major world.

"The Xia Emperor is tyrannical and brutal, without the Dao. In the face of the storm...I, True Immortal Whitepole, now command an army of a million Immortals to follow the will of the Dao of the Heavens in campaigning against the Xia!"

"Campaigning against the Xia!" "Campaigning against the Xia!"
"Campaigning against the Xia!" ...

The voice echoed nonstop within the world.

.....

The citizens of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia were incredibly proud figures, but during the past half month, they had been consumed with awed discussions regarding the countless Immortals who had entered the imperial palace, as well as the three hundred-plus shocking explosions that they had heard over the course of the

past day and night. They had questions...they had suspicions...

But now, everything had been clearly and publicly laid out this day!

"The Xia Emperor is tyrannical and brutal, without the Dao. In the face of the storm...I, True Immortal Whitepole, now command an army of a million Immortals to follow the will of the Dao of the Heavens in campaigning against the Xia!"

A voice rang out from the ends of the world, instantly causing all of the countless denizens of the imperial capital to become stunned. And then...they went berserk.

"Campaign against the Grand Xia?"

"True Immortal Whitepole? Can it be that he is a Pure Yang True Immortal?"

"An army of a million Immortals? Is this real?"

The citizens of the imperial capital were all extraordinary figures; they knew that Pure Yang True Immortals sat above Celestial Immortals in power.

"No wonder countless Immortals gathered at the imperial palace. No wonder! It seems that they are there to deal with the revolt of this True Immortal Whitepole."

"True Immortal Whitepole is incredible; he's actually able to command an army of over a million Immortals. Immortals! And more than a million of them? This is just..."

"Can this 'True Immortal Whitepole' be the ancestor of the Whitepole clan?"

All sorts of conversations.

The local citizens were shocked and uneasy. However, over the course of countless years, the imperial capital had always been safe.

In addition, there had been several marquis-led revolutions in the past, none of which had reached the imperial capital. Thus, the local dwellers were still filled with confidence towards the Xia Emperor.

.....

"Campaign against the Grand Xia?"

"An army of a million Immortals?"

"Good heavens..."

.....

"This voice seems to be ringing out everywhere at the same time."

"True Immortal Whitepole? What's a True Immortal? Can it be that there is actually something more powerful than a Celestial Immortal? A million Immortals...our entire sect has only a single Immortal!"

"No wonder our Flamedoor Commandery has been in such a state of chaos. It seems the world is about to change..."

.....

Every place in the vast land of the Grand Xia, including the four seas that surrounded it...every human, beast, Diremonster, cultivator... they all heard these words, and they all had their own thoughts. The reference to an 'army of a million Immortals' caused particular astonishment and terror. Given that the entire Grand Xia was in a state of chaos to begin with, many mortals with limited experience thought to themselves, "The Grand Xia is probably finished! More than a million legendary Immortals...good heavens!"

Even the more experienced individuals were terror-stricken. "Does the entire Grand Xia even have a million Immortals in it? Hard to say. It is going to be hard for the Grand Xia to win this battle. We might lose."

Everyone felt restless and uneasy. These simple words had already thrown everyone into a state of confusion and chaos.

The imperial capital of the Grand Xia. A side hall in the Skylight Palace.

Upon hearing these words, the Xia Emperor's face changed, as did the faces of the others with him.

"It's finally begun," Ning murmured silently to himself.

"Eh?" The Xia Emperor raised his head, frowning. As the master of the Grand Xia and a man of tremendous power, he could vaguely sense that karma and luck were changing.

"When the hearts of the citizens are with us, luck shall gather here. When their hearts are quaking, luck shall disperse," the Xia Emperor said softly. The hearts of the citizens could, to a certain extent, have an impact on karmic luck. But of course, this wasn't absolute; there were many factors which could impact karmic luck; for example, if the Grand Xia suddenly gave birth to ten Empyrean Gods or True Immortals, its karmic luck would immediately increase by an explosive amount.

In the end...what really mattered the most was personal strength.

As for the hearts of the citizens? That was secondary.

In an ordinary world of mortals, it might be important, but this was a world of Immortals and Fiends; power was what truly mattered. But of course, the hearts of the citizens couldn't be completely neglected; the more karmic luck one had, the better. Karmic luck was simply far too important! It impacted the amount of natural energy one could use and the chances one had of acquiring precious treasures. For example, acquiring Protocosmic spirit-treasures, or perhaps even the legendary Chaos treasures that were born from the primordial chaos itself, required tremendous amounts of luck!

But of course, if your power was on the level of Nuwa, things would

be different.

Nuwa was the most powerful figure of the entire Three Realms, and her luck was indisputably the best as well. She was so powerful that she could destroy Heaven and Earth; even if others found treasures, she could take them away by force. Simply put, she was far too powerful...and power made up an enormous component of 'karmic luck'. When there wasn't such an enormous difference in power, however, other aspects would be more important.

At present, it was clear that neither the Seamless Gate nor the Nuwa Alliance had enough power to wipe their enemies out, and so they naturally would fight over karmic luck.

"I'll make a short trip," the Xia Emperor said softly.

Whoosh.

A white-robed Xia Emperor appeared out of nowhere, then immediately left the side hall.

Moments later.

A similarly sonorous, booming voice rang out, seeming to have descended from the very heights of the Nine Heavens, filling every inch of the Grand Xia.

"Whitepole, child, years ago you were nothing more than a hound for a defeated clan; you supinely knelt before me, quivering in abject terror. Now that you have joined with a few other contemptible figures, you dare speak of 'a million Immortals' and dare rebel against me? These are my heavens, and this is MY world. No one should even think about taking it away. Whitepole, little boy, can it be that you have forgotten what happened to all of the other marquises who rebelled against me? Every single one who rebelled had their souls shattered. There have never been any exceptions, and there never will." The Xia Emperor's dominating voice was filled with a natural, exalted aura that radiated power.

First True Immortal Whitepole's voice, then the Xia Emperor's voice; they came one after the other, both shaking the world.

True Immortal Whitepole's voice was more callous and grim, while the Xia Emperor's voice carried a natural aura of command that came from his countless years of domination over the Grand Xia, making it even more persuasive.

"That's the voice of the Xia Emperor?"

"The voice of the master of our Grand Xia?"

"I heard that ever since the Fiendgod Era, there's only been a single Emperor of the Grand Xia...him, the Xia Emperor."

The countless citizens of the Grand Xia went wild.

The Xia Emperor was a legend! Even tribes of ordinary humans knew that their land was the land of the Grand Xia Dynasty. Now, upon hearing someone say that 'these are my heavens, and this is MY world', they all understood that it had to be the master of the Grand Xia Dynasty who was saying these words.

"So there had been marquises who rebelled in the past?"

"It makes sense. Even our clan has had traitors and rebellions in our history; it's normal for the Grand Xia to have had rebellions as well."

The countless mortals of the ordinary tribes all took this to mean that this was nothing more than yet another 'ordinary' rebellion.

Their tribes were fairly new, after all; they didn't really understand what the difference was between this rebellion and past ones. The Xia Emperor had intentionally muddied the waters, and there was no way for True Immortal Whitepole to explain the difference at all. The Xia Emperor's influence within the Grand Xia was simply too great; he had ruled it for countless ages, and the subjugation his subjects felt towards him was bone-deep.

.....

The Xia Emperor could sense the karmic luck of the world once more gathering and stabilizing. This was how swaying the hearts of the citizens worked; you relied on power, and you relied on your mouth. A single mouth could cause the hearts of the citizens to either gather behind you or to leave you behind.

“Let’s go.” The black-robed Xia Emperor gave the order. “It is time for us to battle against the Seamless Gate.”

Whoosh.

The five True Immortals/Empyrean Gods, Ji Ning, and the other eight commanders all followed the Xia Emperor in leaving the side hall, flying out into the air.

The imperial plaza. The eleven thousand Celestial Immortals and million Loose Immortals had already been divided into ten brigades. Ning and the other eight commanders would lead nine of them,, while the Xia Emperor would control the remaining one.

“The Seamless Gate has already declared war.” The black-robed Xia Emperor looked downwards, his voice booming forth. Trying to deceive these Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals was pointless, and so he said straightforwardly, “Only one side can win in this battle. What we need to do...is head out and completely crush them.”

“Fight!”

Instantly, people began to call out from below him.

“Fight.”

“Fight.”

“Fight!”

A million Immortals all called out the word 'fight' in unison, each of them filled with powerful will and determination. Their voices rang out together as they called for battle, and it seemed as though the heavens themselves were about to collapse. It was a joint howl that seemed to carry the power to break apart the world, filling each of the Immortals with ardor and eagerness. Who said that Immortals were always calm and had no emotions? In truth, it was that things would rarely excite them to this degree!

"This is a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the Eight Dragons Cloudcity." The black-robed Xia Emperor waved his hand, and a palm-sized citadel appeared within his palm. It flew into the skies, then quickly began to expand in size.

This was a completely golden citadel, and it was surrounded by an enormous base of clouds. Eight azure dragons were swimming around it, filled with awe-inspiring power.

"Eight dragons swimming around a city in the clouds?" Ning and the others stared at the eight azure dragons, feeling rather stunned.

"Nine generals!" The black-robed Xia Emperor called out.

"Present!" Ning and the other eight responded.

"Command your Immortals and enter the Eight Dragons Cloudcity," the black-robed Xia Emperor said.

"Yes!"

Ning and the other eight immediately flew forward, and behind them flew an awe-inspiring horde of Immortals. A thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals were behind each of them!

"All the other Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals, follow me. I will be our field marshal in our campaign against the Seamless Gate!" The black-robed Xia Emperor was filled with an awe-inspiring aura of power as he led the five True Immortals/Empyrean Gods and

the many remaining Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals into the city.

Now, the Eight Dragons Cloudcity had become a true military headquarters for an Immortal army.

Chapter 9 – Magic Treasure: Splitter

The eight azure dragons swam around the golden city within the clouds. Space undulated around the city as a spatial tear formed, and the golden city flew straight into the tear, disappearing.

Within the city.

A million Immortals were present. The skies above them were filled with endless clouds; they were completely unable to see the outside world at all. Clearly, they were in a separate space.

“Each of you shall return to your own camps. You are not to act without permission. Any who violate orders shall be executed!” The black-robed Xia Emperor’s voice rang out, echoing throughout the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

“Yes,” the million Immortals assented in unison.

Instantly, the nine armies and the army commanded by the Xia Emperor all entered their respective camps in an ordinary fashion, none of them daring to leave their camps without permission. Everyone understood that in a time of war, military discipline would be extremely tight. If the Immortals were permitted to act and wander about as they pleased, there would be no way an army could be quickly mobilized.

“It’s quite large.” After entering the Darknorth army camp, the hundred thousand Immortals saw a vast region with countless private rooms, more than enough for all of them to reside in.

“Find your own places and go rest for now. You are not to leave the Darknorth army camp,” Ji Ning ordered.

“Yes, General.” The hundred thousand Immortals answered in an awe-inspiring chorus, their voices shaking the skies.

Sounds from the other army camps could be heard from far away.

"Nine generals, come to the main hall for a meeting," the Xia Emperor's voice suddenly rang out.

"Senior apprentice-sister, take a rest first. I'll be back soon," Ning said.

"Alright." Yu Wei nodded. Although she had joined this army, there was no need for her to enter the battle.

Soon, Ning and the rest of the nine generals arrived within the central main hall of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. As for the Xia Emperor and the other five Empyrean Gods/True Immortals, they had arrived long ago.

"In this campaign, I shall serve as the field marshal. I, and I alone, shall be responsible for our movements and our plans," the Xia Emperor said from his throne on high. "It isn't that I don't trust you; rather, the Seamless Gate's intelligence mechanisms are simply unfathomably great. If I tell you, they will probably find out, and so I am keeping it to myself for now."

Ning and the rest of the nine nodded.

"Don't worry, your Imperial Majesty. This is a time of war; we know what is at stake."

"Since you are our field marshal, then it is natural that you shall be in charge of everything, your Imperial Majesty."

The Celestial Immortal generals all hurriedly assented.

Ning had been informed by Subhuti as to how powerful the Seamless Gate was. He understood the Xia Emperor's predicament. As for the others, they might or might not understand, but they accepted the Xia Emperor's explanation.

"Mm." The black-robed Xia Emperor nodded lightly, then waved his hand.

Whoosh!

Instantly, eighteen black globes of fur-covered flesh appeared in the air. The black-furred globes also emanated heart-quaking golden light. These eighteen globes all had tremendously powerful auras, causing Ning to feel startled; he felt as though these were on the same level as the Ananda World-Swords.

"These are top-grade Pure Yang treasures," the black-robed Xia Emperor said. "There are nine pairs in total. They are known as the 'Splitters', and each of you shall have a pair."

"Top-grade Pure Yang treasures?" Everyone present, Ning included, was surprised.

These were incredibly valuable items, even for Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. In fact, for many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, all their treasures combined were not worth as much as a pair of 'Splitters'.

"Why haven't you accepted them yet?" The black-robed Xia Emperor frowned.

"Yes." Ning and the others didn't dare to be slow; they immediately accepted the treasures, filling them with their Immortal energy and easily binding them. Upon doing so, Ning immediately understood how these Pure Yang treasures were meant to be used.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

The pair of Pure Yang 'Splitters' merged into Ning's hands, causing them to instantly transform into bestial paws. Thick black fur grew out from the palm and the back of Ning's hands, and his fingernails became inch-long and knife-sharp. These were the claws of a vicious beast!

"Transform." Ning willed it, and one of his fingernails instantly began to lengthen at high speed, transforming into a longsword. As for the other dagger-like fingernails, they grew shorter until they

disappeared.

"Transform." The longsword vanished, but a sharp blade appeared at the edge of his palm, making it seem like the edge of a greataxe.

Axe, spear, sword, staff...

All of these could be manifested.

The nine Celestial Immortals couldn't help but feel delighted with the results of their experiments.

The black-robed Xia Emperor glanced downwards towards them, then smiled. "Enough."

Ning and the others immediately came to a halt.

"The Heaven Punishers that your formations create possess tremendous power and are skilled in close combat, and so in the war you shall be fighting in melee. These treasures, the 'Splitters', shall serve as the weapons for your Heaven Punishers," the black-robed Xia emperor said. "It doesn't matter if you are skilled in swords, sabers, or other weapons; the 'Splitters' will transform to be of use to you."

Ning and the others now understood. So these were meant for the Heaven Punisher Formations!

"However, let me warn you," the black-robed Xia Emperor said, "That although the Heaven Punishers possess enormous strength, they are not very fast or nimble. Your battle tactics have to be adjusted accordingly. Return to your camps and ponder on what is the best way for you to use your Heaven Punishers in battle, so as to allow them to unleash their maximum power."

"Yes." Ning and the others immediately withdrew.

.....

Within the Darknorth army camp.

Within the largest, centermost private room. This was the commander's residence, and Yu Wei was present here, along with Ji Ning.

"How should I battle?" Ning was frowning, pondering this question pensively.

He thought back to the feeling he had when he had first taken control over the Heaven Punisher, that feeling of tremendous power. Ning nodded slightly. "Right. The Heaven Punisher is most suited for using greataxes or warhammers; in short, heavy weapons. They should be used to fight in a straightforward, head-on manner, rather than in a nimble, graceful manner."

In a battle, one had to make use of one's advantages. If one was clearly weak in terms of agility, and yet still insisted on using flashy, agile sword-arts, one would be courting death.

Fortunately, Ning's true body was that of a Fiendgod, and so he had many insights with regards to close combat. He also knew multiple sword-arts, and so he was quickly able to come up with a battle method that suited him the most.

"What's going on? You've already come back to rest, but are still here mumbling to yourself," Yu Wei said with a laugh.

"I'm fine. I'm just thinking about my battle tactics for when I fight against the Seamless Gate," Ning said with a laugh. "Using the Heaven Punisher is different from using my own Fiendgod body, after all."

"Mm. Then go ahead and spend some time thinking about it." Smiling, Yu Wei sat down next to him.

Ning nodded, then immediately began to train.

.....

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity was now merely three hundred meters long, and it was hidden within the clouds.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Three black-armored figures appeared out of nowhere. Moments later, the black-robed Xia Emperor appeared as well, and he stood next to the city, gazing at the three figures.

“Master,” the three figures called out respectfully.

“Mm. Your mission this time is a critical one; you have to set up the formation perfectly,” the Xia Emperor said. “If you fail...then we’ll have to pay an even larger price.”

“Don’t worry, master,” the three black-armored figures said respectfully.

“Go, then.” The black-robed Xia Emperor nodded.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The three black-armored figures flew off in three separate directions, and then they each used spatial teleports to disappear.

The black-robed Xia Emperor remained there, standing within the clouds, quietly attuning himself to the locations of his three servants.

.....

In the air above a wide river, a black-armored figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The figure quietly pondered for a moment, then made a tossing motion. Instantly, a tower-shaped formation-base flew into the river, sinking into it and drilling deep into its depths.

.....

A black-armored figure appeared out of nowhere in the air above a massive, towering mountain. A tower-shaped formation-base,

covered with countless complicated runes, appeared in his hand as well. He tossed it downwards with incredible power, and it instantly smashed deep into the depths of the mountain.

.....

A black-armored figure appeared in the air above a desolate marsh. He, too, tossed down a small tower.

.....

In just a few moments, more than nine small towers were set up within Whitepole Commandery, each of which was roughly 500,000 kilometers away from Whitepole City.

.....

Within Whitepole Commandery.

The black-robed Xia Emperor stood there quietly amidst the clouds. Upon sensing that the nine little towers had been emplaced, he revealed a smile. "If you start off a step ahead, you'll remain a step ahead! Does the Seamless Gate really think that I'll rely on the power of the imperial capital to the point where I shall simply defend there without fighting back?"

He had been building up the imperial capital for countless eras, and it was indeed the most stable location within the Grand Xia. Right now, he had only left behind the 'white-robed Xia Emperor' to watch over the capital, but he didn't worry at all that it might be breached. The Xia Emperor hadn't chosen to take the easier route of relying on his fortified capital; instead, he had launched an attack!

"Arise!" The Xia Emperor instantly willed it.

Rumble...

.....

Within a vast river, the formerly calm flows of water suddenly turned savage and ferocious. The tremors shaking the river grew increasingly powerful until, with a boom, an enormous tower suddenly sprouted out from within it, rising upwards nonstop. The tip of the tower that jutted out from the water was more than thirty thousand meters long, and the entire tower was covered with countless golden runes and lines. Instantly, the world itself began to twist, and spatial ripples that were visible to the naked eye could be seen.

.....

A towering, massive mountain began to fall apart...because from the heart of the mountain, an even more massive black tower that was covered with golden runes had appeared.

.....

An enormous divine tower was emerging from the marsh as well.

.....

A large region of Whitepole Commandery, spanning more than a million kilometers, became completely trapped within the field of divine towers.

Within the black citadel of the Seamless Gate located above Whitepole City.

The main palace of the Seamless Gate.

True Immortal Whitepole was seated up high, and below him were seated the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and a few Celestial Immortals.

"The imperial capital of the Grand Xia isn't so easily attacked. Our best chances lie in slowly conquering the other territories of the Grand Xia, forcing the Xia Emperor to come out and leave his headquarters," the Cavemaster of the Myriad Demons Cave boomed

out.

"I just received word," Gatekeeper Azurefox said, "That the Xia Emperor had produced a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, and then had his entire army move into it. However...none of the Immortals within the city know where it is. It seems that the Xia Emperor is wary of us and doesn't wish for us to know where he is and what he is doing."

Rumble...

Suddenly, the local space began to change.

The faces of everyone present changed as well.

"A restrictive formation?" The black-haired, black-robed, red-eyed elder laughed coldly. "Didn't you say that the Xia Emperor would rely on the strength of his imperial capital? Where did this formation come from?"

"Qiankun has been locked; there's no way to Greater Teleport or void blink in this area. Not even coresense can be used to investigate outside of it." Gatekeeper Azurefox said softly, "The Xia Emperor is even more confident than we expected; he actually dares to abandon his imperial capital and attack us?"

True Immortal Whitepole's cold eyes held a hint of eagerness within them. He immediately said in an icy voice, "The more he prances around, the faster he will die. In the end...I shall be the master of the Grand Xia. Everyone, prepare for battle!"

Hummmmm...

A deep sound suddenly rang out, shaking the entire Seamless City. This was the alarm sound.

"The attack's already begun?" Within the main palace, True Immortal Whitepole, Gatekeeper Azurefox, and the others all revealed looks of surprise. This was simply too fast. The enemy formation had just

been set down moments ago, and now the attack had already arrived!

Chapter 10 – Vanguard

“Go onto the city walls,” True Immortal Whitepole immediately ordered.

“Let’s go.”

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, along with several Celestial Immortals, all quickly departed from the main palace and flew towards the city walls.

The Seamless City wasn’t that large, and so they quickly arrived at the wall from which the warning signal had come. As they arrived, the soldiers patrolling this wall all immediately knelt respectfully. There were several Void-level Fiendgods amongst them, and some of them had trained in divine abilities that allowed for distant sight; naturally, they were able to see to a great distance.

“Eh?” True Immortal Whitepole and the others had divine abilities and secret arts of their own, and they all stared off into the distance.

It was currently dawn.

The wild marshes here were surrounded by fog and mist, but the gazes of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were able to pierce through them to see far off into the distance. Roughly thirty thousand kilometers away from the Seamless City, a towering, barefoot Fiendgod that was at least thirty thousand meters tall had appeared. He was dressed in just a fur loincloth, the rest of his body completely nude. He was striding forward at astonishing speed, as though chasing after the stars or the moon.

The barefoot, bounding Fiendgod was headless. Instead, he had an incomparably savage face on his chest, with his eyes being where his nipples should be and his belly button having transformed into his mouth. The face was the face of Celestial Immortal Unity. Clearly, this was the Unity Heaven Punisher which had been formed by the Unity Army of the nine Immortal armies of the Grand Xia.

"Heaven Punisher?"

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals atop the walls of the Seamless City couldn't help but feel startled. Although Gatemaster Azurefox had already told them that the Xia Emperor had produced the Heaven Punisher Formation, actually seeing the headless Fiendgod with their own eyes was different. They couldn't help but think of True God Xingtian, the legendary wargod whose fame shook the Three Realms.

"Everyone, what do you think we should do?" True Immortal Whitepole asked calmly.

Gatemaster Azurefox said, "Senior apprentice-brother Whitepole, I know all of the nine generals of the Grand Xia. Judging from the face on the chest of this Heaven Punisher...it should be the army led by Celestial Immortal Unity. I know how many pieces of chaos goldstone they each broke during the trials, but that was before they were taught the critical components of the Heaven Punisher Formation. I trust that the power of their Heaven Punishers have increased dramatically. What we need to find out...is how powerful, exactly, the Heaven Punishers have become! Only then will we have a chance of defeating the Grand Xia."

"It is indeed time for our White-Faced Flood Dragons to test themselves," Empyrean God Threesuns agreed.

.....

While the Seamless Gate was preparing their response, Ji Ning and seven other generals were gathering together at the central, main palace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"Imperial Majesty."

As they arrived, they all saluted in respect.

"Sit." The Xia Emperor nodded.

Only then did Ning and the others sit down. As they exchanged gazes...eh? *Why isn't Celestial Immortal Unity here? Why have only eight of our nine generals arrived?*

"We've already reached Whitepole Commandery," the black-robed Xia Emperor said. "In addition, I've already set down a grand formation that's locked down the space within a million kilometers of Whitepole City. Within this region, Greater Teleportation is impossible and coresense cannot be used. But of course...as the master of this formation, I can scan this region. However, because there are layers of protections surrounding the Seamless City, my coresense is unable to penetrate into it. Everything else, however, is within my reach."

Ning and the others were all startled.

Such speed!

None of them were aware of the Xia Emperor's movements at all.

"When we arrived at Whitepole Commandery, I sent out the army commanded by Celestial Immortal Unity. They've already transformed into a Heaven Punisher and are serving as our vanguard in testing the Seamless Gate's power." The black-robed Xia Emperor pointed into the air, an image instantly appearing. The image was of a vast, wild land, with a towering, mountain-sized, nearly-unclad Fiendgod with no head who was bounding barefoot through it. The face on the chest of the headless Fiendgod was the face of Celestial Immortal Unity; only, it was more fierce and savage.

"He's already made a move?" Ning was secretly startled. "It seems the Xia Emperor truly is being cautious; he's not letting us know about any of his actions at all. Still, that's for the best; it means our chances of victory against the Seamless Gate will be improved." Ning had great faith in the Xia Emperor, as his background guaranteed that there was no way he would ever join the Seamless Gate.

He was the scion of the Primordial Imperial Clan.

The Primordial Imperial Clan was the most powerful force on the side of the Nuwa Alliance! One of the dominating powers of the Primordial Era, even more powerful than both the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Sangha! Ning naturally held great trust in the Xia Emperor's decisiveness.

"This is a Heaven Punisher, a Xingtian Divinity formed through a formation, after all." A red-bearded elder to the right of the black-robed Xia Emperor laughed. "It isn't a real Fiendgod, and its power is controlled by Celestial Immortals and guided by Loose Immortals who control the natural energy of Heaven and Earth, forming it into a fleshly body. Thus, this fleshly body contains tremendous power, allowing it to run at great speed. If it was soaring through the air, it would be moving much more slowly...and so, the most suitable way for advancing is by bounding across the land. Due to its great size and great strength, it runs quite quickly."

Ning glanced at the red-bearded elder.

Ning and the others knew all five of the Empyrean Gods/True Immortals by the side of the Xia Emperor. Three of them were from the Primordial Imperial Clan and were absolute supporters of the Xia Emperor. The other two were True Immortal Dongyan and the founder of the Skyfarmer clan, True Immortal Skyfarmer. Ning had long ago heard that the Kindwater clan had an Empyrean God, but had never seen him before this.

"Firecloud's words are correct." The Xia Emperor nodded. "You need to get a better understanding of how to use the power of the Heaven Punishers. Watch this battle carefully; this will be the first time our Grand Xia truly does battle against the Seamless Gate. Remember; no matter what, don't be overconfident. Your Heaven Punishers each represent a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals. If you are defeated...you won't be the only ones to die. A thousand Celestial Immortals and a horde of Loose Immortals will perish as well!"

Ning and the others instantly felt a heavy feeling in their hearts.

"Unity, you can halt now," the Xia Emperor suddenly said.

His voice was transmitted straight into the ears of the Unity Heaven Punisher.

The image was currently displaying the Unity Heaven Punisher bounding through a vast lake. This lake was at least a thousand kilometers in size. Although the waters of the lake were deep, they barely reached the Unity Heaven Punisher's calves. The giant waves were only capable of wetting the hairs on the massive Heaven Punisher's legs.

"You are only ten thousand kilometers away from the Seamless City," the Xia Emperor said. "Unity, wait here for now. I trust the Seamless Gate's attack shall arrive soon.

.....

The Unity Heaven Punisher just stood there quietly within the lake, as unmoving as though it had been there since the Primordial Era, as though nothing in the world could possibly shake it. Anyone who looked at it would feel their hearts quake. The aura radiating from him was an aura of power which only the Fiendgods of the Primordial Era possessed. This Heaven Punisher was based off of True God Xingtian, after all; the arrogance and the desire for battle it radiated far surpassed that of most Empyrean Gods.

Suddenly, the waters of the lake began to ripple.

The Unity Heaven Punisher stared towards the distant Seamless City. A little tiny black dot was rapidly drawing closer, and as it was it was expanding in size.

The creature had a white, humanoid face, was covered with black scales, and had two arms and two legs. It was thirty thousand meters tall, but its draconic, serpentine body was ninety thousand meters long.

.....

It was dawn. The surface of the vast lake was covered with mist and dew. A massive, thirty thousand meter tall Fiendgod with no head who was dressed in just a fur loincloth was standing within the lake. Far away, a similarly massive white-faced beast of the Primordial Era with the form of a Flood Dragon was charging forward. It soon reached the lake, and its every step caused the entire lake to tremble and ripple, arousing massive, mighty waves.

Everyone within the main palace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity was able to clearly see this scene clearly.

"A primordial Terrorbeast...the White-Faced Flood Dragon?" True Immortal Dongyan murmured to himself.

"The Seamless Gate should have used a technique similar to ours in creating the White-Faced Flood Dragon." The Xia Emperor, seated on his throne up high, frowned. "From the looks of it...the White-Faced Flood Dragon has no flaws at all. It looks as though it is real. Clearly, this formation should be quite a perfect one; it definitely is something which only a True God or a Daofather could have come up with. However...I wonder how strong it is?"

"Watching a Xingtian Divinity battle against a primordial Terrorbeast, a White-Faced Flood Dragon...haha, I feel as though I've returned to the Primordial Era," True Immortal Skyfarmer said with a laugh.

"Long ago in the Primordial Era, when I was surviving by hiding behind the elders of my clan, I once saw an ancient Fiendgod battle against a primordial Terrorbeast. This spectacle currently before us feels identical."

"Mm." The Xia Emperor laughed and nodded. "When we humans first began to flourish and our status was still low, the Primordial Era was dominated by those ancient Fiendgods and Godbeasts. Back then, it was their world."

Godbeasts and Terrorbeasts could be considered Fiendgods. Fiendgods which had the form of animals were referred to as 'Godbeasts', while beasts that had exceptionally violent dispositions

who delighted in slaughter and murder were referred to as 'Terrorbeasts'.

The primordial Terrorbeasts known as the White-Faced Flood Dragons were born with the power of Empyrean Gods. They were awe-inspiringly famous and were perfectly suited for battle.

"A battle between a primordial Fiendgod and a primordial Terrorbeast?" Ning stared at the images in midair. The massive headless Fiendgod and the massive White-Faced Flood Dragon stared at each other from afar, their battle-intents flooding the scene and invoking an image out of antiquity.

"It's begun. Everyone, watch carefully," the Xia Emperor suddenly said.

.....

Within that still, desolate lake, the towering Heaven Punisher stood face to face with the White-Faced Flood Dragon.

Ssss...

The Terrorbeast's body undulated with a hissing sound as it stared intently towards the Unity Heaven Punisher.

The Unity Heaven Punisher stared back at its opponent, watching carefully.

The two just stood there, staring at each other for a few moments.

Suddenly...the White-Faced Flood Dragon made its move!

BOOM!

The waters of the lake exploded, causing the entire lake to tremble and even the distant shores to shake. The White-Faced Flood Dragon suddenly shot forward, instantly traversing the hundreds of kilometers between it and its foe. Its two arms lashed out like two

incomparably sharp sets of claws, the claws of a Flood Dragon.

The reason why primordial Terrorbeasts were referred to as 'beasts' was because they had many bestial characteristics. Their claws and appendages, for example, were often comparable to incredibly powerful magic treasures. As it charged forward, the sharp claws of the Terrorbeast ripped directly towards the Unity Heaven Punisher's flank, seeking to tear a massive wound within it.

The Unity Heaven Punisher took just a single step back. It raised its right arm, and the edges of its right hand seemed to transform into the edge of a blade. It came chopping down lightning-fast, seeming to carry the power of the true Xingtian himself as it struck.

Chapter 11 – Frenetic Battle

The White-Faced Flood Dragon hurriedly raised one of its hands to block. Its hands were covered with scales and filled with sharp and long claws.

The Unity Heaven Punisher chopped downwards with its hand like a giant axe, striking directly against the left claws of the White-Faced Flood Dragon with such power that the claws were knocked back down towards the White-Faced Flood Dragon's shoulders. The White-Faced Flood Dragon couldn't help but slightly stagger, but then it suddenly twisted about and used its massive, ninety thousand meter long tail to lash out lightning-fast towards the Unity Heaven Punisher.

The Unity Heaven Punisher hurriedly raised a hand to block as well.

BANG!

It couldn't help but be knocked flying backwards, rolling through the waters of the massive lake and kicking up enormous three thousand meters waves. It was as though a mountain had collapsed! However, the waves of the lake didn't impact the Unity Heaven Punisher at all; it was as though an ordinary mortal had slipped and fallen within a muddy pool. It lifted itself up, causing the lake to once more shudder, then threw itself once more towards the Terrorbeast.

The Xingtian Divinity and the Terrorbeast exchanged multiple attacks, the battle between them extraordinarily savage and violent.

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The Xia Emperor, Ji Ning, and the others all watched the images intently, seeing the Heaven Punisher and the White-Faced Flood Dragon battle within the vast lake.

"The Seamless Gate has used a primordial Terrorbeast, the White-Faced Flood Dragon, as the basis for their formation. The profoundness of this formation and its strength in battle is not one whit inferior to our Heaven Punisher Formations." The Xia Emperor frowned. "Look; although the Terrorbeasts are slightly weaker than our Heaven Punishers in bodily strength, their tails possess enormous power and are even stronger than our Heaven Punishers."

Ning and the others nodded.

"Look; they each just wounded the other," the Xia Emperor said. "However, the power of Heaven and Earth quickly heals those types of wounds. Neither has truly wounded the other. Clearly, both sides have incredibly powerful bodies, and it is hard for each of them to truly damage the other with a single blow."

"One on one, it will be hard to achieve victory within a short period of time. The only way to win is through strength of numbers; that's the only way one can kill an opponent quickly," the Xia Emperor said. "If we can 'kill' one of them...if my guess is correct, those Terrorbeasts are formed from at least a thousand Celestial Immortals and countless Loose Immortals. Killing a Terrorbeast will be a tremendous victory."

Next to the Xia Emperor was a female Empyrean God dressed in armor. "In battle, the key to victory lies in strengthening yourself while whittling away at your foes. Whittle a little away this time, a little more next time...our advantage will continue to grow, and in the end we will annihilate our foes with a final strike. I imagine they can't have too many of these primordial Terrorbeasts, these White-Faced Flood Dragons."

As they were chatting amongst each other within the main palace, suddenly...

The battle scene within the midair image changed. The massive lake had been filled with with blurry mists, but suddenly a wind arose, resulting in a massive whirlpool of clouds.

"The energy of Heaven and Earth is filling the place...?" The Xia Emperor's face changed.

"Eight generals, hurry up and assume the Heaven Punisher Formation!" The Xia Emperor suddenly barked.

"Yes!"

Ning and the rest of the eight felt their hearts clench. They, too, had been stunned by the sight of that enormous vortex. They could all tell that the enemies had to be setting up additional Terrorbeast formations and creating more White-Faced Flood Dragons. Clearly, the Seamless Gate had tried to lull the Xia Emperor into a false sense of complacency by initially sending just a single White-Faced Flood Dragon and using just a little bit of natural energy.

Now, however...they were sending all of the White-Faced Flood Dragons they had!

"Hmph, how vicious. So they are trying to deal me a harsh blow in our first exchange?" The Xia Emperor laughed coldly. From the massive whirlpool above the lake, one could tell that the White-Faced Flood Dragons that were taking form had to be within the region of that lake. Why, then, wasn't anything visible yet? The only explanation was that they were all hiding with a portable minor world.

Ning and the rest of the eight immediately flew out from the main hall at full speed, sending their coresense to their subordinates. Ning roared mentally, "Darknorth Army, assemble the formation!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A throng of countless Immortals came flying out from the eight military camps. The Immortals moved at incredible speed, and in the blink of an eye they gathered in midair. Ning flew towards his own Darknorth Army, and everyone joined together into the Heaven Punisher Formations as bloody runic lines appeared, along with an

overwhelming battle-intent.

Soon, eight towering, mountain-sized barefoot Fiendgods that were clad only in fur loincloths had appeared. The eight Heaven Punishers had all manifested, and their auras towered through the Heavens.

"Hurry and reinforce him," the Xia Emperor barked mentally. "Protect yourselves and annihilate your foes. The more you can kill, the better!"

"Yes!"

Ning and the others all assented to the order, and then all eight Heaven Punishers vanished.

.....

The vast lake.

The Unity Heaven Punisher was still battling against the White-Faced flood Dragon Terrorbeast. Suddenly, an enormous vortex of natural energy took form above it, and as soon as it did, another power began to draw from that vortex, causing it to spin even more rapidly and grow even greater.

"Not good." The Unity Heaven Punisher could tell that something bad was happening. A moment later, the Xia Emperor's voice rang out by his ears. "Careful; the Seamless Gate should have other White-Faced Flood Dragons, and they will most likely appear imminently." These words from the Xia Emperor further solidified the Unity Heaven Punisher's suspicions.

With a furious roar, he knocked the White-Faced Flood Dragon flying backwards, then pulled away from it.

As suspected!

Three more mountain-sized creatures suddenly appeared out of nowhere, each of which had long, sinuous bodies with white

humanoid faces, sharp claws, and black, scale-covered bodies that were more than ninety thousand meters long.

"Kill!"

"Celestial Immortal Unity?"

"Unity, die!"

The White-Faced Flood Dragon that had been knocked away, along with the three new Terrorbeast, simultaneously charged forward to assault the Unity Heaven Punisher, who had immediately moved to flee when he had knocked aside the first Terrorbeast. In but the blink of an eye, he ran across the surface of the vast lake and out into the wilderness, trying to buy as much time as he could. In fact, he didn't even turn to face the Terrorbeasts at all; in terms of running speed, the Heaven Punishers were slightly slower, after all.

BOOM!

Right at this moment, when the two sides were about to collide!

Next to the Unity Heaven Punisher, eight towering figures suddenly appeared, all massive Fiendgods that were dressed in fur loincloths. All eight of them were Heaven Punishers; the only difference was in the faces on their chests.

.....

"So he really did...Xiamang's being quite cautious."

Atop the distant city walls of the Seamless City, True Immortal Whitepole and the others were watching the battle that was going on ten thousand kilometers away. Upon seeing the eight additional Heaven Punishers appear, they couldn't help but feel irritated.

The White-Faced Flood Dragon they had sent out had indeed carried a magic treasure that contained a minor world within it which had many experts hidden inside; naturally, they would be able to

unleash their power at a moment's notice.

However, as soon as they had begun to establish their White-Faced Flood Dragon Formation and activate the natural energy of Heaven and Earth, they could immediately sense...that the Xia Emperor's forces seemed to be doing the same thing. The Unity Heaven Punisher was most likely carrying a minor world alongside it as well.

In truth, however...their guesses were slightly off.

This was because...what the Unity Heaven Punisher was carrying was the entire Eight Dragons Cloudcity!

.....

Four White-Faced Flood Dragon Terrorbeasts facing nine Heaven Punishers. The morale of the nine Heaven Punishers of the Grand Xia's side swelled dramatically. They were all filled with tremendous confidence, because they currently held an absolute advantage.

"However...we can't be overconfident. Our every action involves the lives of a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals, as well as the overall course of this war." Although he held an absolute advantage, thanks to the fact that his heartforce had reached the peak of the 'ruler' stage, Ning was still able to remain perfectly calm.

"Unity, Loachwater, Dustfloat; the three of you, go slow down the three White-Faced Flood Dragons closest to you! As for the last White-Faced Flood Dragon...Darknorth, you and the other five join forces against it. You have to slay that White-Faced Flood Dragon!" The Xia Emperor gave the orders through coresense.

"Yes." The Unity Heaven Punisher, the Loachwater Heaven Punisher, and the Dustfloat Heaven Punisher all turned to face the White-Faced Flood Dragons closest to them.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Ning and the other six turned to assault the final White-Faced Flood Dragon.

The four Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate were all rather caught offguard by this, especially the final White-Faced Flood Dragon that was being assaulted by the six.

“Hurry up and join forces to support each other!”

“Join together to block them!”

The White-Faced Flood Dragons all sent mental messages to each other and began to rapidly move towards each other. If the four of them could completely join forces, they would be able to defend against the nine Heaven Punishers. They might be at a disadvantage, but they'd be able to hold on for a brief period of time. Given the Seamless Gate's abilities, they'd have ample time to rescue the four.

Ning and the others expected this as well; their foes weren't fools, and wouldn't just fight in a random, foolish manner.

“No matter what...they are in the wilderness right now, quite far away from the Seamless City. We have to kill them here; if we can kill one, we need to!” The Xia Emperor sent mentally.

“Kill.”

“Kill them!”

The Darknorth Heaven Punisher, Allbeasts Heaven Punisher, Thousand Needles Heaven Punisher, and others all charged forward with explosive power.

As the four White-Faced Flood Dragons were moving closer to each other, the Loachwater Heaven Punisher reached its target Terrorbeast, as it was very close to it to begin with. The mouth on the chest of the Loachwater Heaven Punisher grinned, a savage look in its eyes. So long as it could tie down even one of them, the chances of the other three would drop dramatically.

“Come, then.” The Loachwater Heaven Punisher pounced forwards, and as it did it reached an arm up high, taking a stance like Pangu

splitting the cosmic egg to establish Heaven and Earth. And then...he swung his arm down in a furious strike!

However, the fleeing White-Faced Flood Dragon suddenly turned about, swiping backwards with a claw to block the furious blow of the Loachwater Heaven Punisher.

BOOM!

With an enormous explosion, something happened that was completely outside the expectations of the Grand Xia's side. In this head-on collision...it was actually the Heaven Punisher who was knocked backwards! In fact, it rolled over in midair as it went flying backwards; clearly, it wasn't even able to stabilize its body.

As the White-Faced Flood Dragon knocked the Loachwater Heaven Punisher backwards, it immediately pounced forwards, lashing out with two claws at lightning-fast speed.

Slash! Slash!

The first claw, the Loachwater Heaven Punisher was able to just barely block through using its left arm. However, its body grew even less stable, resulting in an opening appearing before its chest.

The second claw...tore straight through the chest of the Loachwater Heaven Punisher!

In the earlier battle between the Unity Heaven Punisher and the White-Faced Flood Dragon, although both sides had been able to wound the other, the wounds were instantly healed; those were all minor wounds. This time, however...the claw from the White-Faced Flood Dragon actually carried such unstoppable power that with a rip, the chest of the Loachwater Heaven Punisher was completely torn apart! In fact, the many Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals hidden within the body of the Heaven Punisher could be seen. Terror was on the face of all of them!

RIIIIP!

As the sharp claws of the White-Faced Flood Dragon tore through the chest of the Heaven Punisher, it tore through the bodies of countless Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals, killing them!

The Loachwater Heaven Punisher could no longer be maintained. It instantly crumbled, revealing the countless, puny little Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals that had comprised it.

Chapter 12 – Countless Casualties

The countless Immortals of the Loachwater Army...felt nothing but despair!

Although they were fairly strong, without a supreme combination formation like the Heaven Punisher Formation, there was no way they were even remotely qualified to exchange blows with a terrifying primordial Terrorbeast like the White-Faced Flood Dragon! And the White-Faced Flood Dragon before them was even more powerful than the other three Terrorbeasts!

“Sssssss.” The White-Faced Flood Dragon hissed with cold laughter, its enormous claws once more sweeping forward.

“Stop!”

“Vile creature.”

Two furious roars rang out.

Two additional towering Fiengods suddenly appeared out of nowhere. One was the old man with a fiery red beard, his entire body surging with flames. The other was a rather willowy maiden; although she was an Empyrean God, at this moment she chose to use a magic spell instead. With a rumbling sound, a large amount of black water came pouring out, tying down her foe and pulling away the surviving Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals.

“Hahaha...members of the Primordial Imperial Clan?” The Terrorbeast roared with laughter. Its draconic tail lashed outwards as its claws ripped forward, moving to massacre the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals. The survivors all used whatever methods they had available, be it hiding within their Immortal estates or using evasive abilities. In short, they were trying to buy as much time as they could...but alas, compared to the White-Faced Flood Dragon, they were far too weak and slow.

BOOM!

The red-bearded elder, wreathed in blazing flames that soared through the heavens, chopped downwards towards the Terrorbeast with a massive warblade.

The Terrorbeast, in turn, brandished a single claw to block.

The two exchanged a blow that could cause mountain ranges to shake. The red-bearded elder was knocked flying backwards, and at even greater speed than the Loachwater Heaven Punisher had been. The female Empyrean God who had been next to him hurriedly moved forward to take over for him.

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The levitating image was still displaying the results of the battle.

The Xia Emperor, True Immortal Dongyan, True Immortal Skyfarmer, and the extremely muscular Empyrean God all had ugly looks on their faces.

A cold light flashed through the eyes of the Xia Emperor. "That White-Faced Flood Dragon is far more powerful than the other three." He mused silently to himself, "Can it be that it is formed with even more Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals and the others? Or is the commander of the White-Faced Flood Dragon Formation an Empyrean God or a True Immortal?"

There were many possible explanations as to why the Terrorbeast was so powerful.

The same was true for the Heaven Punishers; if it was comprised of thousands of Celestial Immortals and many hundreds of thousands of Loose Immortals, its power would naturally increase dramatically. If a Pure Yang True Immortal commanded it, it would also grow more powerful...and if a monster like Ji Ning was in command, it would

similarly become very mighty.

And yet...

Because of how powerful the physical body of the White-Faced Flood Dragon was, and because it was formed from an ancient formation, coresense couldn't be used to penetrate through it. There was no way to see inside of it at all, and so no one could be certain as to how many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals it held, or who the commander was. Although the White-Faced Flood Dragons all had difference faces, the Xia Emperor knew too little about the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals who battled alongside the Seamless Gate!

The Seamless Gate, however, knew almost everything about the Grand Xia's side. This disparity in information was one of the reasons that something like this had happened. If the Xia Emperor's side had arranged for a Pure Yang True Immortal to take charge of a Heaven Punisher Formation, the enemy would've been able to find out right away from the chest-face of the Heaven Punisher.

There was no way to disguise or change the faces on the chests, because they were naturally formed by the formation itself.

.....

Within the black citadel hovering above Whitepole City. Countless illusory chains continued to fill the area around the black citadel. True Immortal Whitepole and his comrades on top of the walls of the citadel all had smiles on their faces.

"Hahaha...only when you know your enemy and know yourself shall you gain victory in all your battles. The Xia Emperor knows far too little regarding our Seamless Gate. Very few know about Empyrean God Venomsong; they weren't able to tell from the appearance of that White-Faced Flood Dragon that it was being commanded by an Empyrean God." The Hallmaster of Bloodcloud Hall sent mentally, "Azurefox, your idea of having Empyrean God Venomsong personally command a squad was a stroke of brilliance."

"Something like this can only be used once. Next time, they'll know and be prepared for Venomsong's power," Gatemaster Azurefox sent back. "However...once is enough. We've already caused them to suffer a tremendous loss."

How many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals did each side possess?

Both the Heaven Punishers and the White-Faced Flood Dragons...the 'death' of a single one represented an utterly staggering amount of casualties.

Generally speaking, battles amongst Immortals could last for extremely long periods of time. This first clash, however, had already resulted in such major losses for the enemy; it could be considered a tremendous victory. And so, the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on the walls of the Seamless City all had smiles on their faces.

"Mm." True Immortal Whitepole had a smile on his face as well...but suddenly, his face changed.

The faces of the Hallmaster, the Gatemaster, the Cavemaster, and the others all changed as well.

"Not good!"

One of the few Celestial Immortals alongside the True Immortals, Immortal Venomfreak, stared unblinkingly at the distant battle scene.

.....

On the field of battle, no one could predict exactly how things would turn out.

This was because sometimes, new variables would appear so suddenly that neither side would be able to react in time. For example, just now the Loachwater Heaven Punisher was suddenly defeated and its body was torn apart, resulting in the entire

Immortal army being defeated and in countless casualties. This was simply too sudden, as was the Xia Emperor's decision to suddenly send out two Empyrean Gods to slow down the enemy!

In truth, in terms of raw strength, both Empyrean Gods were slightly weaker than the Heaven Punishers and the White-Faced Flood Dragons. The Heaven Punishers and the White-Faced Flood Dragons were formed from an enormous amount of natural energy, after all, and so possessed enormous amounts of strength; they could be considered as having reached the very apex of power possible for Empyrean Gods.

However, their fatal flaw was that once their defenses were breached, they would be finished.

By contrast, Empyrean Gods could rapidly heal from even the most devastating of wounds. This was because their physical bodies were the bodies of Fiendgods! In addition, they were also comparatively more nimble. When two joined forces and used magic treasures and magic spells to support each other, they would still be able to fight evenly.

.....

As the strongest White-Faced Flood Dragon battled against the Loachwater Heaven Punisher, Ning and the other seven Heaven Punishers were assaulting the other three Terrorbeasts. Of the eight towering Heaven Punishers, it was obvious that the one Ning led was the strongest one. He was able to unleash more power from the Heaven Punisher Formations than the others, and so his speed was naturally the fastest as well. His Heaven Punisher ran forward with great galloping steps, and was the first to reach the White-Faced Flood Dragon, not giving it a chance to join forces with the other two.

"Stop him!"

"Hold on!"

The other two White-Faced Flood Dragons shouted out furiously in the human tongue.

Multiple towering figures suddenly appeared out of nowhere. They were all black aberrations that were thirty thousand meters tall, but their auras were clearly weaker than the auras of the White-Faced Flood Dragons. These nine Fiendgods appeared out of nowhere next to the other two White-Faced Flood Dragons, because they had previously been hiding within the minor world magic treasure which was being carried by the White-Faced Flood Dragon which the Unity Heaven Punisher had been battling.

“Die!” Ning’s Darknorth Heaven Punisher noticed the nine figures appear, but he still moved with lightning speed as he bounded through the wild landscape. With a flying pounce, he struck out with his right arm, which had taken the form of a sharp longsword, and stabbed towards the head of the White-Faced Flood Dragon in front of him.

The White-Faced Flood Dragon hurriedly retreated while waving its claws to block.

Clang!

It managed to block the sword-attack, but it stumbled several steps backwards upon doing so. Ning’s Heaven Punisher, however, continued to fly forwards, taking a second leap and once more arriving next to his opponent.

Clang! Clang! The initial clash between Ning’s Heaven Punisher and the enemy caused the enemy to feel shock, because Ning’s attack power was clearly lower. This made no sense at all...the earlier sword-strike from Ning had been incredibly powerful! In addition, they all knew that of the nine Heaven Punishers, the one controlled by Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning, was the most powerful one.

“Fly.” As Ning’s hands collided with the opponent...his right knee suddenly came flying upwards!

There were differences between the Heaven Punishers and actual Empyrean Gods. The Heaven Punishers were stronger, but if commanders were unable to control the full power of the Heaven Punishers, they would be unable to unleash its full might, to say nothing of wielding every part of its body perfectly. The arms of the Heaven Punisher were significantly weaker than its legs. Ning had been pondering on his Heaven Punisher, and he had slowly gained insights on the best ways to use it.

It was very risky to incorporate the legs into his attack patterns; if he was to lose his balance, it would be easy for the opponents to break through his defenses and finish him.

However, the power of his earlier sword-strike was clearly superior to the power of his foe; this meant he could take the risk! Risk-taking could result in major rewards, as the power of his mighty legs was definitely enough to break apart his foe.

BOOM!

Ning's powerful Heaven Punisher sent its right knee flying upwards, smashing viciously against the face of the White-Faced Flood Dragon!

CRUNCH!

One could hear the sound of 'bones' shattering. The pale, humanoid face of the White-Faced Flood Dragon instantly twisted into unrecognizable shape as it stumbled and fell backwards.

A longsword suddenly appeared in each of Ning's Heaven Punisher's hands. The two longswords were actually just long, sharp spikes; they had a sharp tips, but no blades!

Ning wielded a longsword in each of his two hands. After his earlier knee-strike, he delivered a pair of blows with the swords towards the head of the fallen White-Faced Flood Dragon!

As the White-Faced Flood Dragon fell, it knew that things were looking dire and so it hurriedly brandished its claws, seeking to

block...but it was only able to block one of the longswords.

As for the other longsword...

PIERCE!

The sharp tip of the longsword carried the full, unfathomable power of the Heaven Punisher, and it forcibly punched its way through the twisted, mangled neck of the White-Faced Flood Dragon.

And as it penetrated in...it began to grind away at the innards of the White-Faced Flood Dragon's body!

"AHH!"

"NO!!!!"

An enormous amount of baleful energy began to flood towards Ning. Clearly, many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals had just died, resulting in the creation of so much baleful energy. As Ning was the commander of the entire formation, the baleful energy naturally ignored everyone else and swirled straight towards Ning, being absorbed by the three Darknorth swords that were located within the Jindan region inside Ning's body.

The entire White-Faced Flood Dragon instantly collapsed, revealing the countless Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals inside of it! These Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals all fled in panic, trying to use any idea they could come up with to escape, hide, or flee.

Ning's Heaven Punisher, however, swung both hands towards them in a savage blow. His hands were like massive stormclouds, covering the entire area where the countless ant-like Immortals were.

BANG! BANG! The cloud-like palms descended, causing countless Immortals to perish!

An even greater flood of baleful energy poured into Ning's Jindan

region, and his three Darknorth swords greedily drank in all of it.

Chapter 13 – Armies Retreat

Ji Ning didn't hesitate to slaughter these Immortals at all. He showed no mercy whatsoever, because showing mercy to his foes was the same as being cruel to those he needed to protect.

Bang! Bang!

The enormous, stormcloud-like palms continued to slam down towards the frantically scurrying Immortals, causing them utter terror and agony. Some of them even began to curse in rage, but they were nothing more than the lowest of ants that would take part in this storm. In truth, in the face of this storm, the Loose Immortals would have even more miserable outcomes than normal mortals would.

"Stop!"

"Halt!"

The two closest White-Faced Flood Dragons and the nine black aberrations came charging towards Ning.

Ning immediately recognized the black aberrations. "Empyrean God golems?"

These newcomers had auras that were slightly weaker than the auras of the massive formation-created Fiendgods; they were Empyrean God golems. The reason why Ning was able to recognize them right away was because when the forces of the Seamless Gate had attempted to assassinate him at Brightheart Island, Old Man Yuan had killed them and given Ning their treasures...and one of the treasures Ning acquired was an Empyrean God golem! It was identical to these nine new Empyrean God golems; black-colored, savage-looking, and horned.

"Darknorth, well done!"

"Excellent."

"Well-struck!"

"Hahaha...kill them all!"

The other seven Heaven Punishers excitedly moved to join forces with Ning. They couldn't be blamed for their excitement; the Seamless Gate had just slain the Loachwater Heaven Punisher, while Ning then immediately killed a White-Faced Flood Dragon afterwards. Just now, the other Heaven Punishers had been enraged by the destruction of the Loachwater Heaven Punisher. Upon seeing Ning wipe out an enemy Terrorbeast in bloody fashion, how could they not grow excited?

"Haha, the other nine black Fiendgods are all Empyrean God golems," Ning sent mentally. "They should all be weaker than the White-Faced Flood Dragons."

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The three closest Empyrean God golems pounced towards Ning.

Ning willed it, pulling all the treasures left behind by the countless slain Immortals into hisi storage treasure. Of course, quite a few Immortals managed to escape. Given that Immortals fled at high speed, that they were fleeing in every direction, and that some had even hidden themselves within their Immortal estates, there was no way Ning could wipe them all out. Similarly, when the Loachwater Heaven Punisher had been destroyed, quite a few Immortals had managed to survive as well. But of course, those who survived were the fortunate ones; in a battle at this level, surviving after the formation collapsed was purely a matter of luck!

"Hmph." Ning's Heaven Punisher took a single side-step, then launched a fierce claw attack towards an attacking Empyrean God golem.

Ning's normal combat style involved the usage of the [Starseizing

Hand], and so he was very experienced in bare-handed combat.

Fists? Claws? Palms? Sword-fingers? His two hands could use all these techniques!

The Empyrean God golem hurriedly raised its arms to block.

BOOM! When contact was made, Ning's claw-hand attack changed into a fist-strike, and his fist became covered with a series of sharp, protruding spikes. These spikes were formed from the top-grade Pure Yang treasure, the Splitters. The punch landed heavily against the twin arms of the Empyrean God golem, and although the arms managed to block and withstand the strike, the golem itself was still knocked flying backwards. It flew a tremendous distance, then landed deep into the waters of the great lake. It rolled several times before being able to rise to its feet and once more charge forward, but by this time Ning had already engaged in combat with the other two Empyrean God golems.

Ning's strikes all focused on using overbearing amounts of power!

As for the three Empyrean God golems, they were much as Ning had protected; due to being created from precious materials, they were incredibly tough defensively, but their attacks were clearly on a lower level. However, because the three golems were attacking Ning in unison, Ning didn't have enough time to fight them and defeat them one-on-one.

"Kill!"

"These Empyrean God golems aren't that tough."

"Significantly weaker than the White-Faced Flood Dragons."

The other Heaven Punishers began to exchange blows with the Empyrean God golems and the White-Faced Flood Dragons.

Battle continued unabated.

To completely tie down Ji Ning required the usage of three Empyrean God golems, but only two were needed to tie down the other Heaven Punishers. The nine Empyrean God golems and the two White-Faced Flood Dragons had joined forces, supporting each other in defending against Ning and the rest of the eight Heaven Punishers. Although they were at a disadvantage, the Seamless Gate's forces were able to hold.

The Empyrean God golems were incredibly resilient, after all; their bodies were comparable to Pure Yang treasures! But of course, they had their weaknesses as well; once they were captured or bound, they were finished.

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Empyrean God Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon battled furiously for a time against the two Empyrean Gods of the Grand Xia, but was unable to kill them. Upon seeing the two White-Faced Flood Dragons and the nine Empyrean God golems suffer assaults from the eight Heaven Punishers, he immediately let out a furious roar and began to charge towards them. Although the two Empyrean Gods of the Grand Xia did their best to bar the path, they were unable to stop this mighty White-Faced Flood Dragon.

"This White-Faced Flood Dragon is too powerful," Empyrean God Firecloud sent mentally.

"My guess is that it has to be an Empyrean God or a True Immortal commanding it," the female Empyrean God sent back. "Let's use our spells to assist Ji Ning and the rest of the eight."

"Right. Right now, it's best if we use spells," Empyrean God Firecloud agreed.

The female Empyrean God and Empyrean God Firecloud charged forwards while casting their spells.

Both of them were using binding-type spells! A roaring black river of

water and a flood of golden magma began to furiously swirl about and entangle the three enemy White-Faced Flood Dragons and the nine enemy Empyrean God golems.

"Damn." The Venomsong Terrorbeast was enraged.

"The binding power is nauseating."

"I'm moving even slower now."

The other two White-Faced Flood Dragons felt the effects even more strongly. Before this, they had an advantage over the Heaven Punishers in terms of speed, but now they were at a disadvantage. Even their attack power had dropped significantly.

As for the nine Empyrean God golems, they were impacted even more heavily. They were weaker to begin with, and now that they were being slowed down by the spells, their power dropped dramatically. Fortunately, the two Empyrean Gods of the Grand Xia had cast wide area-of-effect spells that weren't focused on them, which was why they were able to continue battling against the Heaven Punishers.

"Damn."

The Venomsong Terrorbeast was impacted the least, and he charged forward in berserk fashion.

Ning and the other seven Heaven Punishers instantly felt great danger impending.

"Whacko, Allbeasts, Dustfloat, let's go deal with it," Celestial Immortal Unity sent. The four of them were facing the Venomsong Terrorbeast, and were the closest ones to him; thus, it was up to the four of them to receive his attacks.

BOOM! Celestial Immortal Unity was sent flying backwards from the initial collision, but the other three Heaven Punishers immediately moved to block the Venomsong Terrorbeast, giving him no chance to

press the assault.

For a time, four Heaven Punishers launched wild joint attacks against the Venomsong Terrorbeast. They rained down their blows in sequence, supporting each other and managing to withstand the terrifying White-Faced Flood Dragon!

As for Ning and the remaining Heaven Punishers, they continued to wildly battle the nine Empyrean God golems and the other two White-Faced Flood Dragons. Ning alone was suffering assaults from six separate Empyrean God golems.

.....

Atop the distant walls of the black citadel, the Seamless City. True Immortal Whitepole, Gatekeeper Azurefox, and the others were watching from afar.

"I told them long ago to be wary of the one named Ji Ning." Gatekeeper Azurefox had a frown on her face, as well as a hint of anger on it.

"You can't blame them." The Hallmaster of the Bloodcloud Hall shook his head. "Things change too quickly on the field of battle. Once you give your enemy an opening, you won't even have a chance to flee. In addition...that Ji Ning took on a tremendous risk. He actually dared to use jump up and use a knee-strike? True Fiendgods rarely use techniques like that."

True Immortal Whitepole said coldly, "To do what others dare not do; that's what made him formidable. For true Fiendgods, their full power is merged together with each strike, and so it is enough to use the arms to attack. The formation commanders of the Heaven Punishers and the White-Faced Flood Dragons are only able to control part of their strength, to say nothing of merging it all together in each blow. The legs of the Heaven Punishers are far more powerful than their arms. If Ji Ning hadn't used such a risky attack, our side would've been able to hold on and the nine

Empyrean God golems would've been able to make it there in time. But Ji Ning's risky maneuver...he broke through the defenses of the White-Faced Flood Dragon with a knee, then slaughtered it."

The others present all needed.

"This Ji Ning truly has become a dangerous variable," Gatemaster Azurefox said.

The horned Immortal Venomfreak had an even uglier look on his face now, but a mocking look was in his eyes.

Originally, when he was with the Nuwa Alliance, he had been worried that Ning would take revenge on him.

Now that he had joined the Seamless Gate...it became the Seamless Gate who wanted to kill Ning, even more than Venomfreak did.

"This battle can be concluded now," True Immortal Whitepole said. "The Xia Emperor has other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals who have yet to appear, while we haven't used our full power either. Even if both of us did use our full power, neither of us would be able to sweep away our opponents. This initial clash has been enough; it's shown us our opponent's strengths and weaknesses. It's time for us to ponder on them."

"Agreed."

"We definitely do need to ponder on this. It seems...we'll need to request additional reinforcements from the Fifth World."

Everyone nodded.

None of them had expected to fully destroy their enemies in this first clash; that would be a gross underestimation of the Xia Emperor. If they were so foolish as to continue to flail about...even if they managed to win, the price they would pay would be catastrophic. What the Seamless Gate wanted to do was to conquer the entire Grand Xia while suffering the least amount of casualties possible.

But of course...if there were no other options, they would be willing to pay whatever price was necessary.

"Venomsong." True Immortal Whitepole looked towards the other Empyrean God of the Seamless Gate. "Halt the battle. Come back."

The person he was speaking to was, of course, Empyrean God Venomsong, albeit just a clone.

As a Fiendgod, he was able to effortlessly create thousands of clones.

"Fine." Empyrean God Venomsong narrowed his eyes and nodded. "However...before we retreat, I want to personally test this Ji Ning's power."

"Thank, you Venomsong." The black-robed, black-haired, red-eyed elder suddenly said something for the first time.

"Haha, fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy, no need to thank me. I know that you were entrusted with fellow Daoist Blackheaven with the task of killing Ji Ning. I might be helping you out, but I am primarily acting to serve the Seamless Gate's interests. This Ji Ning truly is an impediment to our conquest of the Grand Xia." Empyrean God Venomsong nodded.

The red-eyed elder nodded lightly.

He wasn't under the command of Gatemaster Azurefox at all. He had come on the request of Celestial Immortal Blackheaven, and he had just one mission...to kill Ji Ning!

.....

"The Seamless Gate is most likely going to retreat soon. Beware their final attack," Ji Ning sent mentally. He was the strongest member on their side, and so was able to read the flow of battle better than any of them.

"Right. Everyone, be careful."

"Not good. The most powerful White-Faced Flood Dragon just ran off. Ah! Ji Ning, be careful!" Celestial Immortal Unity sent mentally.

Ning noticed this as well.

The most powerful White-Faced Flood Dragon moved incredibly fast. Upon disengaging, it shot out in a solitary line and charged towards Ji Ning.

Instantly, the other Heaven Punishers moved closer to Ning, intending to support him.

"Die."

The Venomsong Terrorbeast charged forward ferociously. Venomsong wanted to test Ning...but of course, if he was able to kill Ning, that would be even better. His claws tore outwards, seeming to carry the power to rend apart the sky itself as he struck straight towards Ning's Heaven Punisher.

Ning took one step back with his left leg, both knees bending slightly as he used both of his palms to meet the ferocious claw-strikes.

BOOM!!!

This was the most powerful exchange of blows in this initial clash. The shockwaves from the collision caused the ground itself to split apart, with enormous craters appearing in the ground beneath both Ning's Heaven Punisher and the White-Faced Flood Dragon. Both their bodies sank downwards, their legs plunging knee-deep into the earth. The earth around them rippled outwards like massive waves, and the ripples spread all the way to the distant lake, kicking up absolutely shocking waves.

Chapter 14 – No Way Out

Ji Ning could sense a terrifying power spread out to encompass his entire body. He had bent his knees and assumed a stable stance to build up power to block the blow, but upon actually receiving this terrifying strike from Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon...Ning couldn't help but stagger back heavily by one step. He almost went down to one knee as his body was pressed downwards before he was able to weather the powerful collision.

Bang! A cold smirk was on Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon as his second claw attack ripped out towards Ning.

He had two sharp claws, after all! Just now, he had only used a single one to tear at Ning.

BOOM!

Ning remained very clear-headed. His right hand manifested another longsword, and his sword-light struck out like water, lashing sideways against the sharp claws of the Venomsong Terrorbeast and knocking it aside. Ning immediately retreated, pulling back. "Hmph. This White-Faced Flood Dragon's first claw came with all of its power and was tremendously strong. The sudden attack from the second claw, however, was a bit weaker."

Venomsong didn't really expect to actually be able to slay Ji Ning with just two claws. He immediately moved to pursue Ning, sending the two claws in another ferocious strike.

Ning was forced back time and time again, but he was still able to hold on.

"Ji Ning."

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth."

"Hold on!"

The other Heaven Punishers came to assist Ning.

Empyrean God Venomsong could tell that he had lost his chance. All he could do was furiously strike out with his draconic tail.

Bang!

Ning lifted both his arms, blocking the strike from the ninety thousand meter tail, then relied on the counter-force from the blow to retreat backwards. His movements, however, remained perfectly steady.

Empyrean God Venomsong gave Ning a hateful look, then glanced sideways at the other seven Heaven Punishers. He smirked, then barked a mental order, "Retreat!"

"Yes!" Everyone assented to his order.

The other two White-Faced Flood Dragons and the nine Empyrean God golems immediately began to retreat, under the command of Empyrean God Venomsong. They all began to move at full speed, bounding across the wild marshes, traversing tens of kilometers with each movement as they moved rapidly towards the levitating black citadel. Even though Ning and the others remained more than ten thousand kilometers away from the Seamless City, they could still sense how utterly enormous the citadel was!

"No need to chase." The Xia Emperor's voice rang out by the ears of Ning and the others.

The eight Heaven Punishers and the two Empyrean Gods came to a halt, just staring off into the distance at their fleeing foes. They then turned to look at each other, a complicated look in their eyes.

"It was just a very short exchange, but countless Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals died." Ning and the others couldn't help but feel a sort of sympathetic grief. Today, it was the Loachwater Heaven Punisher which had fallen. In the future...it could be them.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Ning and the others disappeared into thin air.

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Countless Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals were gathered here, within the main plaza of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. They stared at the Xia Emperor and the others around him, such as Ning and the rest of the nine generals. Celestial Immortal Loachwater was with them as well. Although the Loachwater Army had suffered catastrophic casualties, there were still many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals who had survived. Celestial Immortal Loachwater had been lucky and had managed to survive as well.

"My fellow Immortals," the black-robed Xia Emperor said solemnly, "This was the first battle between our Grand Xia and the Seamless Gate. Even I didn't expect that in our first real battle, we would have suffered such heavy losses. The Loachwater Army suffered heavy casualties, with 436 slain Celestial Immortals and 51,210 slain Loose Immortals."

Utter silence.

Ning's own heart sank as well upon hearing this.

436 Celestial Immortals and 51,210 Loose Immortals. What did this represent? Everyone present knew the answer. Prior to the onset of this great storm, the Black-White College had only produced a single Celestial Immortal in its entire history. Even the Youngflame clan, a clan that was ranked as one of the top ten clans of the Grand Xia, had only produced nine Celestial Immortals and around a thousand Loose Immortals.

In other words...the casualties they had suffered today represented a force that was tens of times more powerful than the entire Youngflame clan!

The slain Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals had come from

throughout the various commanderies of the Grand Xia; they had come in response to the Xia Emperor's summons, gathering at the imperial capital. They had come from countless schools, clans, and sects; that was why so many of them had been able to gather in one place.

"This happened as a result of poor command decisions by myself." The black-robed Xia Emperor's voice was low. "The Seamless Gate has a formidable intelligence network, while we know very little about them. We didn't know in advance that one of the White-Faced Flood Dragons was that powerful. Still...we know all along that our war against the Seamless Gate would result in heavy losses."

The countless Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals below him were all silent. Their hearts were heavy.

"However!"

"Their losses were even heavier than ours!" The black-robed Xia Emperor's gaze turned slightly more vicious than before. "Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning, led his Heaven Punisher to defeat and slay a White-Faced Flood Dragon. He killed more than six hundred Celestial Immortals and nearly seventy thousand Loose Immortals."

The morale of the Immortals located below him began to lift noticeably.

"They killed our warriors, but we killed theirs as well. In fact...we killed even more of them!"

"This is war!"

"A war of life and death. The Grand Xia, the Seamless Gate...one side has to fall!"

"If we don't want to die, then we have to kill them. Kill them all!"

The Xia Emperor's voice rang out, echoing throughout the city.

"Kill them all!" The Xia Emperor roared once again.

"Kill them all!"

"Kill them all!"

The Xia Emperor's voice, along with the enormous pressure all of the Immortals felt, caused all of the Immortals to let out angry snarls as well.

All of the Immortals present knew that there was no way for anyone to hide from this storm. They had to face it head on. If they wanted to survive...they had to go all out! They had to make their enemies die!

"All of you can go back to your camps to rest. This will be a long war. Today was just the beginning," the Xia Emperor ordered.

"Yes, Imperial Majesty."

Instantly, all of the Immortals acknowledged his command, then flew back in a dense mass towards their respective camps.

"Let's go back to the main palace." The Xia Emperor swept his nine generals with his gaze, then immediately turned to head towards the main palace.

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Within the main palace.

The Xia Emperor was seated up high on his throne. His five Empyrean Gods/True Immortals were by his side, while Ning and the rest of the nine remained standing before them.

"Imperial Majesty." Celestial Immortal Loachwater's face was completely ashen. He stepped forward, then immediately went down to his knees. "It was because of me. I was hungry for a victory, causing so many of our fellow Immortals to die. Imperial Majesty,

please punish me!"

The Xia Emperor gave him a glance. "You were the general for the Loachwater Army, but today you caused so many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals to die in battle. Indeed, you cannot escape responsibility for this disaster. However...strictly speaking, I can't fully blame you. That White-Faced Flood Dragon was indeed more powerful than we had expected. This time, I'll let the matter rest...but in the future, you must be more cautious. I will arrange for new Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals to enter and replenish your Loachwater Army. Do not disappoint me a second time!"

Although he now knew that he would not be punished, Celestial Immortals Loachwater still felt great guilt in his heart. Upon hearing the Xia Emperor promise him new Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals to rebuild his Loachwater Army, he couldn't help but feel shocked. "Imperial Majesty, this..."

"I have faith in you," the Xia Emperor said calmly. "Enough. You can rise."

"Loachwater will not disappoint you again, your Imperial Majesty." Celestial Immortal Loachwater rose to his feet, a fierce look in his eyes.

The Xia Emperor turned his gaze towards the others. "What do you think of this battle?"

"That White-Faced Flood Dragon had to have been commanded by an Empyrean God or a True Immortal," the nearby red-bearded elder said. "When I fought against him, I saw that although his claw attacks were seemingly simple, they contained full mastery over the Grand Dao of Blackwater. The commander is definitely an Empyrean God or True Immortal. As for how many additional Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals he had under his command...that's hard to say."

"Right." The Xia Emperor nodded. "Ji Ning and the rest of the nine, listen up; in the future, you absolutely must not fight against that

White-Faced Flood Dragon by yourself. Even you, Ji Ning, must only attack if you have helpers nearby."

"I understand," Ning said. "When I fought against him, I saw that he was superior to me in every aspect, be it strength or speed. I might be able to hold on for a short period of time, but any longer..."

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth, you might be able to hold on for a short period of time, but the rest of us would probably be defeated in just one or two exchanges," Celestial Immortal Dustfloat said, shaking his head.

"Thus, when fighting that White-Faced Flood Dragon, you have to have at least two helpers," the Xia Emperor said. "Also; what are your opinions regarding those Empyrean God golems?"

"Tough to deal with."

"Very tough to deal with."

"They get in the way."

Ning and the others had fought against the golems personally. They all had frowns on their faces.

Ning had already become the unspoken leader of the nine generals. He said, "The attacks of the Empyrean God golems weren't that strong, but they are manufactured golems with bodies as tough as Pure Yang treasures; it is hard to damage them through direct attacks. The only way to deal with them is to suppress them through overwhelmingly superior power, then capture them. However...if several of them join together, there's no chance for us to capture them at all."

"Right. No matter how we attack them, we can't damage them," Celestial Immortal Unity and the others agreed.

Ning realized that these Empyrean God golems were much similar to himself, back when he had first learned the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art];

weak attacks but incredibly powerful defenses. Most likely, there was only two ways to deal with them; constricting and binding them, or suppressing and sealing them!

"Right, your Imperial Majesty," Ning suddenly said.

"Mm?" The Xia Emperor looked towards Ning.

"I have an Empyrean God golem," Ning said, "One of the same type that we just fought against."

"You do?" The Xia Emperor was surprised and delighted.

"I acquired it when the Seamless Gate attacked me," Ning said. "But I only have one."

"Good, good, good! In their campaigns against the other major worlds, the Seamless Gate lost several Empyrean God golems to our side. I did everything I could, but only managed to procure three of them. Now that you have another one...excellent!" The Xia Emperor said hurriedly. "These Empyrean God golems are incredibly precious. I won't force you to give it up for free. Ji Ning, if there is anything you want, I will trade it to you, but you have to give me the golem."

Ning said, "Since I mentioned it, I naturally have the intentions of giving it to you, your Imperial Majesty. As for what I need...Imperial Majesty, you can just give me some Pure Yang Immortal pills or Great Firmament Immortal pills."

"I've prepared a very large number of these pills." The Xia Emperor let out a sigh. "I don't know how long this war will go on for. All of our Immortals will need Immortal pills to replenish their energy at critical moments, and so we need many pills. Haha...I'll give you an entire bottle of them."

Ning immediately waved his hand, producing a black, palm-sized horned golem within his hand, one which looked identical to the Empyrean God golems they had previously battled against.

Because this was a manufactured treasure, its size could be changed as necessary.

The Empyrean God golem flew towards the Xia Emperor, and a bottle of pills flew towards Ning. Ning knew very well that this golem required many Celestial Immortals working together to control it. It was useless to him, but it was incredibly useful on the field of battle. As for the pills...he desperately needed powerful pills to train in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. At present, he had only reached the fifth stage of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

"Everyone." The Xia Emperor said, "The battle between us and the Seamless Gate is one in which only one size can survive. There's nowhere for us to retreat to. In addition, we will be fighting against them for a long period of time; after all, if we can tie down more of their forces here, it will mean that they can't use those forces to attack other major worlds."

Ning and the others nodded.

The Grand Xia was just one battlefield in this war. If all the major worlds hid their forces without willing to use them, then the Seamless Gate would be able to focus on them one-by-one and defeat them.

Thus...every single major world had to go all out, to fight as if they were mad! If the Seamless Gate wanted to take them over, they would have to pay enough of a blood price!

"Starting from tomorrow, each time the nine Heaven Punishers go out into battle, Ji Ning will be the leader. None of the Heaven Punishers are to stray too far away from him. I will ensure that the Eight Dragons Cloudcity is close to Ji Ning, so that I can reinforce him immediately," the Xia Emperor said. "The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals will also reinforce you as needed. At appropriate moments, I'll also send out the four Empyrean God golems to assist you."

"This war will most likely last for a very long period of time."

"Now that you have battled against the Seamless Gate, both you and them are more experienced. It is unlikely that either side will be able to gain easy victories in the future. However...you must not grow too complacent. Over the course of many battles, you will have many chances to slain one of the White-Faced Flood Dragons, and each will represent an enormous victory," the Xia Emperor said. "Succeed several times, and the foe will no longer have any White-Faced Flood Dragons left. The more of them perish, the greater our chances of success shall be."

"Life will be tough. We'll be engaged in a long war, and if you slip up, the result will be death," the Xia Emperor said. "Thus...my nine fellow Immortals, you must be careful."

"Yes, your Imperial Majesty."

Ji Ning, Celestial Immortal Unity, Celestial Immortal Loachwater, Fairy Rainsoar, Celestial Immortal Dustfloat, Celestial Immortal Allbeast, Fairy Thousand Needles, Celestial Immortal Whacko, and Celestial Immortal Rainbow all assented solemnly.

The war would be a cruel, vicious one. Perhaps others amongst them would fall, and each time they fell, it would mean that a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Celestial Immortals had fallen with them. And yet...none of them felt any fear.

In the face of the war before them, there was no way out for anyone!

Chapter 15 – Protection

Ji Ning and the other eight commanders all returned to their own military camps, which were quite spacious. Entering the camp, Ning walked towards his own residence.

“General.”

“General.”

When the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals saw Ning, they all called out to him. Ning smiled back to them, even calling out some of their names. “Fellow Daoist Frostlike. Fellow Daoist Dong Zixiu...” He could sense the veneration these Immortal soldiers felt towards him. Back when they were in the imperial palace of the Grand Xia, these Immortals only followed Ning because the Xia Emperor had ordered it. Now, however, Ning’s performance in battle had thoroughly convinced them. If they were to follow a powerful leader, they would have a much greater chance of surviving this terrible storm.

The veneration these people showed Ning caused him to feel full of vigor and energy, but it also made him feel pressure.

He soon reached his residence.

Yu Wei, dressed in white clothes, was waiting for him at the door.

“You are back.” Yu Wei smiled. “I heard the other Immortals talking about you just now. Our Darknorth Army has achieved a great victory; supposedly, we killed hundreds of Celestial Immortals and tens of thousands of Loose Immortals.”

“Yes. However, our losses in the Loachwater Army were very heavy.” Ning strode into the residence, then stared in surprise. “Eh?”

This residence was the general’s residence, and so it was fairly large. Prior to this, however, it had been sparsely decorated and plain-looking. Now, however, there were paintings hanging on the walls,

and there were exquisite pieces of furniture laid out throughout the rooms. In fact, there was now even a special study, with a table that was covered in quills, ink, and paper. There was a brush-holder that had three feather brushes within it. When relaxing, Ning usually liked to write calligraphy and paint paintings. At the innermost part of the residence, there was also a private resting room meant for the two to sleep together.

Some exquisitely made delicacies were currently placed atop the black wooden table.

"Senior apprentice-sister, how'd you do this so quickly?" Ning laughed. "I just went out for a short while, but by the time I returned, our entire home has changed. You've even prepared a meal for us."

"This campaign is most likely going to be a very long one. We are most likely going to be living here for a very long period of time; naturally, I have to decorate it a bit and make it look nice. Just now, when I saw the Xia Emperor summoning the nine of you to the main palace, I took the opportunity to cook a few dishes as well," Yu Wei said with a smile. "You've come back with a resounding victory; we have to celebrate it!"

"Yes, we do." Ning immediately sat down, picking up his chopsticks and picking up a crystalline piece of meat that looked like pineapple in texture, then eating it. This was indeed personally prepared by Yu Wei; he could tell as soon as he tasted it. When the two had lived together in the Black-White College, Yu Wei had often personally prepared food for him.

"Excellent. It's delicious," Ning praised. "You should sit and have some as well."

Yu Wei sat down next to him, accompanying him in eating.

Ning and Yu Wei ate together and chatted together. Suddenly, Ning felt as though his heart, which had previously still felt excited and restless after that great battle, had turned calm. Back when he had

lived by the side of his parents, he felt this sort of inner peace. Now, when he was with Yu Wei, he felt the same thing.

Ning glanced at Yu Wei, who was eating slowly while gently stroking her stomach. He murmured silently to himself, "Even though the storm has come...I, Ji Ning, swear that I will do everything I can to protect you and our unborn child." The things he needed to protect were also the things he cared the most about.

.....

The underwater estate. The Stellar Hall. Before the thatched cottage.

Ning's true body manifested a seemingly material Immortal sword within his hands, using it to train in sword-play. Sword-light flashed everywhere, and sword-ki flew everywhere.

"I have to master the entire Dao of the Sword as soon as possible, as well as come up the heartforce technique." Ning came to a halt, a hint of delight in his eyes. "Although my battle against the Seamless Gate was quite short, a life-and-death battle like that was of tremendous help to me in gaining further insights into the Dao of the Sword."

That battle was a battle in which both sides harbored the intention of killing the other.

There was no mercy to be shown whatsoever!

It was a battle where one completely emptied one's mind of everything besides the fight. This did indeed allow for an astonishing improvement in one's insights into the sword. For example, even back on Earth, if you had one swordsman who had studied for several years in a martial arts school and another swordsman who had fought in just a few life-and-death battles with the goal of surviving, the latter would probably be able to kill the former in just a single exchange of blows.

Life-and-death battles...these things could indeed provide

tremendous strength!

"In the future, I'll be engaged in many battles. I have to work hard to understand more of the Dao of the Sword and master it as soon as I can." Ning was already very close to the final bottleneck of the Dao of the Sword; after reaching it, he would only need one more step before mastering it.

"I've just barely managed to reach the basic level of skill in the application of heartforce to the soul, but to create..." Ning frowned when he thought about heartforce, because it was clearly far harder to advance in it.

It was easy to reach the basic level of skill, because there was a very close relationship between heartforce and the soul to begin with. Even if you didn't know any special heartforce techniques at all, just possessing powerful heartforce would be of tremendous help in controlling magic treasures. Thus, Ning had quickly reached the most basic level of skill, but to further analyze it and come up with many practical methods for perfecting it and applying it to the soul was of incredible difficulty.

"Time to begin training in my [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]."

Ning immediately sat down in the lotus position. He sat down within the thatched cottage, pulling out a pill bottle. Pulling out the plug, he glanced inside, then nodded. "The Xia Emperor is indeed generous. Just a portion of this is enough for me to train to the Sixth Cycle."

He immediately pulled out a sparkling golden pill, a Great Firmament Immortal pill, then tossed it into his mouth. The Great Firmament Immortal pill contained an astonishing amount of energy, but his Fifth Cycle foundation of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was completely capable of absorbing it all.

.....

The main plaza of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Nine massive Heaven Punishers stood there, and next to them were four equally towering Empyrean God golems.

"Ji Ning, the nine of you should have a good spar against them. Get them familiar with battles against these types of opponents." The black-robed Xia Emperor stood to one side, watching as he gave instructions.

"Right." The nine Heaven Punishers looked at the four golems.

Three of the golems were from the Xia Emperor, while the fourth was originally Ning's. It must be understood that the Xia Emperor had two thousand Celestial Immortals under his direct command. While he had sent some to replenish the ranks of the Loachwater Army, he had also arranged for others to go utilize the Empyrean God golems. Empyrean God golems needed to be controlled by Celestial Immortals; Loose Immortals were useless for this purpose.

"Be careful," Ning said.

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth, go ahead and use your full power!" The four Empyrean God golems were proceeding with caution as well.

Ning and the rest of the nine exchanged a glance, going so far as to grin at each other. Then, with a series of whooshing sounds, they immediately threw themselves towards their foes.

Nine Heaven Punishers against four golems?

Generally speaking, a single Heaven Punisher would be able to easily suppress two of these golems. Ning was able to give all four of them a good fight by himself. When all nine of them joined together...they would naturally be able to dominate these Empyrean God golems with ease.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

They battled so violently, the world itself seemed to turn dark.

Fortunately, the Eight Dragons Cloudcity was a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, far more stable than the outside world. They couldn't even damage the ground in the slightest. Ning and the others unleashed their full power, using saber-arts, sword-arts, staff-arts, axe-arts, and more, sending the four golems flying again and again. The four Empyrean God golems were incredibly resilient and able to swiftly clamber back to their feet and once more enter the fray. This was, of course, a 'battle' to accumulate experience; if they were fighting against the Seamless Gate, they would really be going all out to capture, subdue, and kill.

A short while later...

"You can halt," the Xia Emperor said.

The nine Heaven Punishers and the four Empyrean God golems immediately came to a halt.

"How did it feel?" The Xia Emperor asked.

"The four of them are roughly as powerful as the Empyrean God golems on the Seamless Gate's side," Ning said.

"Not much difference," Celestial Immortal Unity and the others agreed.

The Xia Emperor nodded. "As I suspected. We've tested these Empyrean God golems multiple times, and as a result we've discovered that having a hundred and fifty Celestial Immortals controlling them is an optimal number. If you use any more, it won't increase the power of the golems by much, but if you use any fewer, the amount of power will drop dramatically. A hundred and fifty; that's the perfect number for using these golems."

"Just a hundred and fifty?" Ning called out in surprised, "If that's the case, then they are able to tie me down by using just four golems and six hundred Celestial Immortals."

Ning knew exactly what a pain these Empyrean God golems were to

deal with.

The Xia Emperor shook his head. "The reason why they are so tough is due to the golems themselves. They are incredibly rare; right now, I only have four of them, including the one you gave me. Even the Seamless Gate has a limited number of them. Otherwise, they would just employ a large number of them, at which point we would definitely be defeated."

Ning and the others all nodded.

"Empyrean God golems are very difficult to create, and they are extremely costly. Our side is completely unable to manufacture them." The Xia Emperor sighed. "The core formation-diagrams of the Empyrean God golems...our Daofathers and True Gods have tried on multiple occasions to steal some, but they failed every time."

"The Seamless Gate is that incredible in their golem-forging skills?" Celestial Immortal Unity and the others hadn't known this.

"Of course. In the Dao of Constructs, they far outstrip us; there's no need to deny this at all," the Xia Emperor said.

Ning nodded as well.

Years ago, his junior apprentice-brother Mu Northson had been imprisoned within one of the enemy bases. That place, a mere base, had amply demonstrated that their skills in manufacturing constructs had reached an unfathomable level. Even Northson had been stunned by their prowess! Despite that, the base had most likely been one of the low-level manufacturing facilities for the Seamless Gate.

"The core formation-diagrams for the golems are the most valuable parts," the Xia Emperor said. "If we can acquire them, then we can manufacture golems of our own. In fact, the Seamless Gate has other golems as well, including some that are even more powerful than Empyrean God golems. Acquiring a set of the core formation-

diagrams would be of great benefit to our overall position throughout the entire Three Realms. Gaining a formation-diagram would be even more important than losing the entire Grand Xia major world. But alas...we haven't been able to acquire one."

Ning and the others all understood.

Not even the leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Way, the Primordial Imperial Clan, and Subhuti of the 'Dream of the Three Realms' had been able to procure these diagrams. From this, one could tell how tightly and carefully the Seamless Gate protected them.

"If we could acquire a set..." The Xia Emperor's eyes were filled with obvious desire.

If he could acquire one, then most likely all of the Daofathers and True Gods of the Nuwa Alliance would thank him. It must be understood that the strongest golems of the Seamless Gate had the power to threaten even True Gods and Daofathers. This was one of the gravest concerns for the major powers of the Nuwa Alliance, and one of the most frightening aspects of the Seamless Gate. In fact, to ensure that golems would be manufactured properly, the leaders had even set up an independent organization, the 'Myriad Demons Cavern', to carry out that task. The Nuwa Alliance had attempted to infiltrate the Myriad Demons Cavern to acquire formation-diagrams, but they had failed each time.

"Enough of that." The Xia Emperor refocused his attention, turning to look towards Ning and the others. "Take a rest. The forces of the Seamless Gate are already taunting us and calling for battle. Prepare to engage them."

As he spoke, the Xia Emperor waved his hand, producing an illusory image next to him. The illusory image showed four White-Faced Flood Dragons and nine Empyrean God golems; clearly, the destroyed White-Faced Flood Dragon had its ranks replenished. Like the Xia Emperor, the Seamless Gate had quite a few Celestial

Immortals and Loose Immortals in reserve.

Ning stared at the illusory image.

Killing one would be a major accomplishment!

"Gotta win."

When Ning looked at the image before him, the picture in his mind was that of Yu Wei caressing her belly. He had to protect them, no matter what.

After resting for a few moments...

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Nine Heaven Punishers vanished from the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, going to the outside world.

Chapter 16 – Three Years

The walls of the Seamless City.

True Immortal Whitepole stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the black-haired, black-robed, red-eyed elder. They stared at the distant battle occurring, with nine Heaven Punishers doing battle against four White-Faced Flood Dragons and nine Empyrean God golems.

“Fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy,” True Immortal Whitepole said with a calm laugh, “Fellow Daoist Blackheaven asked you to kill Ji Ning. I wonder... when do you plan to make your move?”

In a head-on battle, True Immortal Whitepole was very confident in his powers. Most likely not even Azurefox was a match for him. In terms of killing someone, however...True Immortal Whitepole didn't dare to compete against True Immortal Crimsonjoy. Engaging in a head-on fight was completely different from murdering someone. True Immortal Crimsonjoy was extremely skilled in murder; he had many murderous techniques indeed! In the Seamless Gate's headquarters, True Immortal Crimsonjoy had a very special, transcendent position. Not one of the hundred Seamless Gates under the command of the Godking were qualified to command True Immortal Crimsonjoy. Crimsonjoy reported directly to the Godking himself.

Not even True Immortal Whitepole was able to ask him for help. And so, he truly didn't understand...how was it that Blackheaven, who was clearly a mere Celestial Immortal, had managed to accomplish this? True Immortal Whitepole always had the feeling that Celestial Immortal Blackheaven had many secrets about him.

“No rush. The time isn't right yet,” True Immortal Crimsonjoy said calmly.

“Right, fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy...fellow Daoist Blackheaven must have paid a significant price to get you to help out, right?” True

Immortal Whitepole said.

True Immortal Crimsonjoy glanced at True Immortal Whitepole, then grinned. "You couldn't possibly guess what the price was."

"Let me have a guess?" True Immortal Whitepole laughed, intrigued.

"I won't tell you." True Immortal Crimsonjoy shook his head.

"Still..don't worry. Since I accepted fellow Daoist Blackheaven's request, I'll do everything I can and pay any price to kill Ji Ning."

True Immortal Whitepole nodded lightly. It wasn't too likely that he would be able to take such a powerful figure under his command, and so he simply said, "You said that this isn't the right time yet. When is the right time?"

"Wait patiently." True Immortal Crimsonjoy stared at the nine distant Heaven Punishers and the most powerful of them all, Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher.

"Wait?" True Immortal Whitepole frowned.

True Immortal Crimsonjoy gave True Immortal Whitepole another glance, then said, "The more overconfident they are, the greater my chances of killing them are. Right now, however, the war has just begun. All of them, the Xia Emperor concluded, are on high alert and are extremely cautious."

"But...they'll always be cautious," True Immortal Whitepole argued.

"That's different." True Immortal Crimsonjoy shook his head. "Right now, they are cautious of everything. After multiple battles happen and as time goes on, they'll slowly grow accustomed to the rhythm of battle, and as that happens...although they'll still be careful, they'll naturally become less guarded against those things they feel accustomed to."

True Immortal Whitepole nodded in seeming understanding.

"Simply put...after they fight for a long time, even though they'll still be in great danger each day, they'll grow numb to the danger," True Immortal Crimsonjoy said. "What I need to do is wait for them to grow numb."

"Then when the time comes, I'll be watching to see your abilities, fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy. Our Seamless Gate has sought to kill Ji Ning, but we've never been able to succeed, even though we've spent quite a bit of effort on it," True Immortal Whitepole said with a laugh.

True Immortal Crimsonjoy shook his head. "The Seamless Gate has many powerful figures; Commander Azurefox alone has many mighty experts under her. If the Godking truly wanted to kill Ji Ning and was willing to pay any price, including risking a battle against the Daofather behind Ji Ning, Ji Ning would've died long ago."

True Immortal Crimsonjoy's gaze fell once more upon Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher. He let out a soft sigh. "He truly is a peerless genius. A pity..."

True Immortal Crimsonjoy was a very patient man.

He waited for over three years.

Three years later. A misty dawn.

Within an incredibly vast wilderness that was filled with craters. Seven massive Heaven Punishers and five Empyrean God golems were in a frenetic battle against three White-Faced Flood Dragons and eight Empyrean God golems.

The land shook, and the mountains trembled. In fact, many of the distant mountain ranges had already collapsed into piles of rubble.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Ning's Heaven Punisher was wielding a pair of divine swords that would occasionally appear and occasionally vanish. Sword-light flashed everywhere, with the attacks occasionally transforming into

heavy punches and insidious claw strikes. He was currently fighting against the Venomsong Terrorbeast, and the nearby Celestial Immortal Unity was occasionally giving him a hand. The two of them, fighting together, were now completely capable of slowing down Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon.

"Retreat." Venomsong gave the order.

Whoooosh! Instantly, the massive forms began to gather together and retreat.

Ning and his comrades just watched as they departed. "Let's leave." Ning gave the order as well.

The seven Heaven Punishers and the five Empyrean God golems vanished, returning back to the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The many Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals were allowed to disperse and return back to their own camps. As for the seven generals, they turned to fly towards the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Whoosh!

The seven of them arrived, then sat down atop the city walls.

"Come, let's try some of my wine today. I acquired this Immortal wine when I took part in the Feast of Peaches ¹ back in the Primordial Era. Only a little bit is left now, but...since we have wine today, let's get drunk today. Come, come, come!" Celestial Immortal Whacko laughed loudly, but a hint of grief remained visible within his eyes.

"Whacko's wine? That's good stuff." Ning immediately accepted and filled his gourd with the wine.

The others smiled and filled their gourds in turn.

They each held their gourds and began to drink from them.

Not long after the war had begun between the Grand Xia and the Seamless Gate, the then-nine generals had agreed that after each battle, the nine of them would get together and reflect on the battle and on what they had learned from it. However, after the battles became increasingly common, it became rare for Ning and the others to learn anything new from them. Their teamwork had become nearly perfect, and so their get-togethers after each battle became drinking sessions. After three years worth of battles, they had become as close to each other as real siblings, and had become accustomed to this sort of get-togethers.

“Loachwater.”

“Thousand Needles.”

Ning silently murmured these two names.

Ning didn’t feel quite as close to Celestial Immortal Loachwater, because Loachwater had died roughly half a year after the start of the war. Although the two were comrades, their relationship hadn’t had the chance to reach an extremely deep level.

But Fairy Thousand Needles...

Everyone present, including Ning, Unity, and Dustfloat all felt great pain in their hearts. Celestial Immortal Whacko felt the most pain of all.

Ning and the others had known all along that Immortals would die as a result of this long war. Over the past three years, four of their Heaven Punishers had been crippled. Loachwater had lost his Heaven Punisher during his very first battle, while Unity had lost his during a battle in the second month. He had managed to survive, and had received Immortal reinforcements.

Roughly half a year after the war had started, however, Loachwater had once again had his Heaven Punisher destroyed. He hadn’t been

lucky enough to survive again; this time, he was slain, along with many of the Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals under his command.

Due to the number of Immortals that had been sent to reinforce the Unity Army, there weren't many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals in reserve. And so, this time the Loachwater Army wasn't rebuilt, and the nine armies turned into eight armies.

Afterwards, the army of Celestial Immortal Allbeasts was also dealt a heavy blow. Allbeasts himself, however, was lucky enough to survive.

The fourth Heaven Punisher to be destroyed was that of Fairy Thousand Needles.

"Thousand Needles." Ning sighed to himself. She had just died roughly a month ago. She had been a rather cold and grim Immortal. After battling by her side for three years, all of them had grown very close to Thousand Needles. In fact, they had even learned that Celestial Immortal Whacko had been wooing her for countless eras, albeit with no success.

However, after fighting shoulder-to-shoulder for three years, Celestial Immortal Whacko and Fairy Thousand Needles had slowly grown very close to each other. Ning and the others had often teased them for it.

Who would've thought...

That a battle like that would've happened!

In that battle, True Immortal Azurefox, Empyrean God Threesuns, and Empyrean God Beastleave had all appeared at the same time. In truth, True Immortals and Empyrean Gods now often appeared during these battles. This, however, was the first time True Immortal Azurefox had personally acted. She was both a True Immortal and an Empyrean God, her body was that of a powerful Godbeast, and she had a very high level of insight into the Dao. This was her first time

showing her power, and her power exceeded their expectations, forcing the Xia Emperor to personally intervene as well.

Alas, things happened too quickly in a battle!

The Thousand Needles Heaven Punisher was destroyed, and Fairy Thousand Needles died on the spot.

In that instant, Whacko had gone completely mad. Ning and the rest went berserk as well...but there was nothing they could do. After destroying the Heaven Punisher, their foes immediately retreated.

They felt pain!

That grim, callous woman who had shared life-and-death battles with them...the woman who occasionally revealed a smile in the fact of Whacko's crazy antics...that astonishing, beautiful woman...she died, just like that.

"Darknorth, you are the youngest of us; you definitely have to be ranked as our 'Eighth Brother'. Come, address me as 'Second Sister'." Fairy Thousand Needles had teased Ning about his age, and the fact that he was accustomed to addressing her by her name. Roughly a year after the start of the war, months after the death of Loachwater, the other eight had grown very close to each other and had sworn oaths of brotherhood with each other.

Ning was naturally the youngest, and so they referred to him as 'eighth'.

It was very rare for Immortals to swear oaths of brotherhood and sisterhood with each other, but once the relationship between individuals reached a very deep level, it was a natural next step.

"Thousand Needles..." Ning glanced at Whacko.

Whacko and Thousand Needles had become Dao-companions. Thousand Needles' death had been a huge blow to Whacko. In fact... Whacko no longer acted as whacky as before.

"If Yu Wei died...would I be able to endure that blow?" Ning asked himself. As he did, he realized that he couldn't even imagine it... because there was no way he could endure it.

"Let's go. It's time to go back." Ning raised his head, draining all of the Immortal wine in his gourd, leaving not a drop behind.

"Right. Let's go."

"Get a good night's rest. We have more battles ahead."

The three years of war had changed them all dramatically. They now loved to sleep, because sleep could wash away their mental weariness. They no longer had the graceful Immortal auras of old; rather, they now seemed much more vulgar, casual, and relaxed.

.....

After parting paths with his seven sworn siblings, Ning returned to his camp.

"General."

"General."

All the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals he met on the way back felt deep, heartfelt veneration for Ning. It had been three years, but the Darknorth Army had never suffered a serious blow, and that was because of this peerless figure before them, a man who had trained for less than a century before becoming a Celestial Immortal.

Ning returned to his residence.

Yu Wei had already prepared a meal for him and was waiting for him.

"You reek of alcohol," Yu Wei said with a laugh.

Ning couldn't help but glance at Yu Wei's belly. The swell in her belly was already quite noticeable by now, as it was fairly large. Laughing,

he said, "Our child really is the child of an Empyrean God and a Celestial Immortal. He's still staying in his mom's belly and isn't willing to come out."

"The children of Gods and Immortals can gestate for anywhere from one year to decades," Yu Wei laughed. "As for those that are born from the natural world itself, from Heaven and Earth, its not uncommon for the process to take trillions of years."

"There's no need for our family to wait that long." Ning moved closer, pressing his ear against Yu Wei's stomach. He could already hear the little heartbeat from within.

In Chinese stories, one of Sun Wukong's notable misdeeds was his crashing of one of these feasts, stealing and eating all of the large peaches in a fit of anger after not being invited. ↪

Chapter 17 – Kill Ji Ning

Yu Wei smiled as she looked at Ji Ning press his ear to her belly. "How wonderful it would be if we could always be together like this. Alas..."

An inescapable shadow lurked deep within Yu Wei's heart.

Her membership in the Seamless Gate had been set in stone during her past life. Her soul had been marked by the Godking, and there was no way she could resist at all. In fact, the soul-seal caused her to view the Godking as she would a father. Although she knew this, it wasn't possible for her to feel the slightest bit of hatred. Instead, all she felt was veneration...but in her heart, she wasn't willing to harm Ning either.

"During the past three years of war, Azurefox came to me in my dreams just a single time, back when things first started. Afterwards, there's been no contact at all." Yu Wei was worried about this. "I wonder when they will give me another order."

As the battles continued, the allotted time for her and Ji Ning to be together was drawing to a close as well.

Eventually, there would come the day when she and Ji Ning had to part their ways.

"I hope that day doesn't come too soon."

"I hope that our child, at least, will be safely born into the world first." Yu Wei silently prayed to herself.

.....

Noon the next day. The Golden Crow hung high in the sky, filled with blazing heat.

The Seamless City.

The main palace.

Eight Empyrean Gods/True Immortals were seated here.

“My fellow Daoists.” The black-robed, black-haired, red-eyed elder rose to his feet, his calm voice carrying a bone-chilling cold to it. “Today...is the day of Ji Ning’s death! I’ll have to trouble you all for your assistance!”

“Haha, if fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy manages to kill Ji Ning, the Grand Xia will have lost its most powerful Heaven Punisher. The impact will be as significant as the loss of an Empyrean God or a True Immortal.” True Immortal Whitepole laughed loudly, “If you are able to wipe out his true body as well, fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy, then you’ll have rendered even greater merits. I’ll definitely inform the Godking of your accomplishments.”

True Immortal Crimsonjoy shook his head and said calmly, “I’m not completely confident in being able to slay his true body. If his true body remains with his Primaltwin, then I’ll be able to kill both at once! But if it is somewhere else...this time, I’ll probably only be able to kill the Primaltwin.”

No one knew where Ji Ning’s true body was hiding. Thus, Celestial Immortal Blackheaven had invited True Immortal Crimsonjoy to kill only the Primaltwin.

The death of the Primaltwin would mean the loss of a life.

Ning had a total of two lives; his true body’s life, and his Primaltwin’s life. Each was incredibly precious to him!

In truth, Ning’s true body was within the underwater estate, and his underwater estate was with his Primaltwin at all times!

“Everyone, let’s head out,” True Immortal Whitepole said, laughing as he rose to his feet. “If we manage to kill him today, we have to put on a huge banquet in celebration.”

"Today, we'll bear witness to your prowess, fellow Daoist Crimsonjoy."

"I've battled against Ji Ning countless times, but I haven't been able to do anything to him."

Empyrean God Venomsong and the others all rose to their feet as well. They all walked away from the main hall, summoning their respective armies.

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"Engage the enemies!" The Xia Emperor's voice rang out throughout the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Instantly, each of the armies began to mobilize.

Within the Darknorth army camp.

"Senior apprentice-sister, prepare some food and wait for my return." Upon hearing the Xia Emperor's orders, Ning rose to his feet as well. "Today, I truly wish to eat 'Roar of the Nine Snow Dragons'." These were all dishes that Yu Wei had personally named. After becoming a Celestial Immortal, Ning began to prefer vegetables, and this particular dish was a vegetarian one.

After speaking, he immediately transformed into a streak of light and flew away, not waiting for Yu Wei's reply.

Yu Wei walked past the door, watching as Ning appeared with countless figures beside him. "Come back safely." Every time Ning went out into battle, Yu Wei couldn't help but feel worried.

.....

"Assemble the formation!" As Ning gave the order, the thousand Celestial Immortals and hundred thousand Loose Immortals under his command all executed the formation technique. They looked

towards Ning with trust in their eyes. Over the past three years, Ning's prestige had reached a shocking height.

Soon, the thirty thousand meter Fiendgod with no head, the Heaven Punisher, took form.

The seven Heaven Punishers all exchanged glances.

"Come, let's teach those little bastards of the Seamless Gate a lesson." The seven Heaven Punishers all laughed, then walked out of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity together.

Moments after the seven Heaven Punishers vanished, the five Empyrean God golems headed out as well.

.....

A vast, desolate, region that had been ravaged by war. The great lake here had vanished long ago, and even the majority of the lakewater had been annihilated by the terrifying battles. The only thing left behind was a few rivers and small creeks.

Three White-Faced Flood Dragons and eight Empyrean God golems were here, calling for battle.

Whoosh.

Seven Heaven Punishers appeared out of nowhere.

"Let's fight."

"Kill them."

Led by Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon, the forces of the Seamless Gate immediately charged forward.

"Let's go," Ning said. Under Ning's leadership, the seven Heaven Punishers went forward into battle as well, and as they did the five Empyrean God golems of the Grand Xia also emerged.

Boom!

Boom!

Ning's Heaven Punisher was the first to engage, fighting one-on-one against Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon.

They had battled far too many times by now and were far too familiar with each other. Both sides knew exactly what abilities the other had, but Ning's side still didn't dare to be overconfident. The main purpose of this long, drawn-out war was to whittle away and lock down the enemy forces. At the same time...although the battles were seemingly pointless and drawn-out, with no one perishing, in reality both sides were like vipers that were silently waiting for an opportunity.

Once that opportunity came...they would reveal their venomous fangs and go for the kill! The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals that both sides were hiding would reveal themselves as well, seeking to annihilate part of the enemy forces at one blow.

"A chance."

"I need a chance."

As Ning and Unity joined forces to battle against Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon, Ning's mentally watched the entire battlefield with incomparable calmness.

Over the past three years, he had grown much more powerful as well.

He had been dancing for so long at the line separating life and death that it had been of tremendous benefit to him mastering the Dao of the Sword. His Dao of the Sword had already reached the bottleneck, and based on his new insights, Ning had come up with an eleventh stance to the [Three-Foot Sword].

He had made some progress in researching heartforce as well.

Although he hadn't reached the 'expertise' level which Old Man Yuan had mentioned in his [Heart Sutra], if Ning was to utilize this technique, he would instantly be able to unleash three times as much power from his Heaven Punisher! Given his much greater power and his improved sword-arts, he was fully capable of reaching a higher level of power.

However...

Ning understood that even if he increased his power by a full level, he still wouldn't be a match for Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon.

"Even if I did unleash my full power, the Seamless Gate would immediately adjust and compensate for it. It wouldn't affect the overall scheme of things at all," Ning mused to himself. "I have to find a good opportunity, a perfect opportunity to suddenly unleash my full power and wipe out yet another White-Faced Flood Dragon."

The death of Thousand Needles had made Ning long for that day even more.

When she had died, Ning had wanted save her...but alas, he had been too far away. Even the Xia Emperor and the others had appeared, but to no avail.

On the field of battle, things happened far too quickly. Life and death could be determined in an instant!

"I have to find a chance."

.....

Within the underwater estate.

The giant yellow bear and the seven Empyrean Gods were seated within the main hall, eating Immortal fruit and drinking Immortal wine.

"Ji Ning is quite the madman. While his Primaltwin does battle outside, his true body trains nonstop within the Stellar Hall." The kind-looking Empyrean God Dovesnake was holding a cup of wine, smiling merrily as he watched an image of the outside world. This image had been created by the giant yellow bear, who was capable of seeing the world outside. Since the underwater estate was being carried by Ning's Primaltwin, it was naturally able to see the battle outside.

"The storm has descended upon us. Ji Ning feels pressured, and his child is about to be born into the storm. Of course he wants to protect Yu Wei and his child. It makes sense that he is training so frantically," Empyrean God Redsnow said with a calm laugh.

The true body and the Primaltwin shared memories with each other, but didn't disturb or interfere with each other.

Even if the Primaltwin was to completely focus its mind on battle, the true body could still be completely immersed in training.

"Right. Ji Ning's strength is increasing stably. His Dao of the Sword has reached a bottleneck; once he masters it, the time for him to meet his Empyrean Tribulation will arrive shortly afterwards." The child-like Empyrean God Primelight said eagerly, "After he becomes an Empyrean God, our Starseizing Manor shall once more appear in the world."

"It has been a long, long time since the name of the Starseizing Manor has been said in the Three Realms."

All of the Empyrean Gods were filled with eagerness.

After the war in the Grand Xia had begun, all seven of them had decided to move out from their world into the underwater estate itself. After all, Ji Ning might encounter a dangerous situation during the war. If he did meet with danger and tried to summon them, and they had to first go from the Starseizer major world to the underwater estate, and then go to the outside world, valuable time

would be wasted, possibly resulting in Ning's death.

They weren't willing to take that risk, and so they permanently relocated to the underwater estate.

"Look, True Immortals have appeared."

"The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on both sides have appeared. It seems as though today's battle will be interesting to watch."

"Agreed. It's so boring. They just fight, fight, fight. Only when a large number of Celestial Immortals or Loose Immortals die do things grow a bit more interesting," Empyrean God Sunblaze's sonorous voice boomed out.

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The outside world.

The battle had reached a fever pitch. On the Xia Emperor's side, True Immortal Dongyan and Empyrean God Firecloud had both appeared. As for the Seamless Gate, True Immortal Crimsonjoy and Empyrean God Threesuns had mobilized.

The True Immortals used their magic treasures and spells to control the field of battle, while the Empyrean Gods would alternate between using spells and engaging in close combat.

Once they were added into the mix...the entire field of battle grew very chaotic. In chaos, opportunity could be found.

"A chance. An opportunity..." As Ning battled carefully, he continued to search for a chance to kill an enemy with even greater vigilance.

"Go." The red-eyed elder, True Immortal Crimsonjoy, pointed a finger from afar. Instantly, countless black flowers and plants began to emerge from the earth. These flowers and plants quickly began to wrap themselves around the feet of the seven Heaven Punishers and

the Empyrean God golems. However, both the Heaven Punishers and the Empyrean God golems possessed tremendous power, allowing them to break free from the grip of the plants. Still, their speed was negatively impacted.

“Damnit.” Ning hated this type of restrictive spell the most. True Immortal Crimsonjoy would usually only appear once every ten days or so, and Ning had long since grown accustomed to this sort of plant-based restrictive spell. Despite that, he couldn’t help but be impacted by it.

As for the distant True Immortal Crimsonjoy, he was silently murmuring the words to an incantation in his heart.

A speck of golden light appeared with his palm.

This was a tiny bit of the golden liquid from the golden pellet Jindan that was within his body. It was incredibly precious, and it contained an unbelievably dense amount of Pure Yang energy.

“Birth.” True Immortal Crimsonjoy calmly said this word aloud.

The vast array of black flowers and plants that covered the area suddenly began to wither...but the black flowers and plants that were directly below Ning’s feet began to suddenly grow at a frantic pace. They rose higher and higher into the air as well. Previously, they were only a few thousand meters tall and were only capable of covering the feet of the Heaven Punishers, but now they increased to more than six thousand meters as they climbed their way up Ning’s feet.

In addition, black chains suddenly appeared within the black flowers and plants.

These black chains were very similar to the black chains which anchored the Seamless City here. A total of nine of them were present, and they surged into the skies, many tens of thousand meters long. They wildly twisted out in circles, wrapping themselves

around Ning, carrying a sort of power that was somehow related to space. Ning used his sword-arts, but was completely unable to break apart the black chains as they ravenously wrapped themselves around him.

"Ji Ning."

"Darknorth."

"Darknorth!"

The other six Heaven Punishers were shocked and frantic. They could sense the terrifying amount of power held within those black chains.

"This spell which Blackheaven taught me really is formidable." True Immortal Crimsonjoy didn't hesitate at all, immediately producing a red jade bottle within his hands. He aimed it towards the distant Ji Ning, then roared loudly, "Get in here, now!"

A heaven-shaking attractive power was suddenly applied to the distant Heaven Punisher, currently entangled and bound by those nine black chains.

Chapter 18 – The Final Battle Suddenly Arrives

The nine black chains wrapped themselves around Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher, which was hacking away with two divine swords against them to no avail, causing just a few spatial ripples.

"Not good." Ning saw True Immortal Crimsonjoy pull out that red jade bottle from afar. Ning didn't hesitate at all.

"Come out!" Ning had originally been planning to continue to hide his full power in the hopes of finding an opportunity to deliver the Seamless Gate a vicious less, but he could no longer afford to do that. Although he could call out senior Redsnow and the rest of the seven Empyrean Gods at any time, that was a waste of their tremendous power. Once they joined forces to form the Seven Planets Empyrean God, only True Gods or Daofathers could suppress them. A force like theirs could completely change the entire course of the war for the Grand Xia. Until things were absolutely critical, Ning wasn't willing to use them.

Swish! Swish!

Two Immortal swords suddenly appeared out of nowhere, manifesting within Ning's Heaven Punisher's hands. These were two of the top-grade Pure Yang 'Ananda World-Swords'. These were true Immortal swords, unlike the 'Splitter' artifacts that merely transformed into that shape. As a result, they were somewhat more powerful when one used sword-arts. At the same time, and for the first time, Ning applied his heartforce to his soul.

Rumble...

His heartforce served as the commander, with the power of his soul as its soldiers. In a very harmonious manner, all of the potential power of the soul was summoned and applied, and his control over the Heaven Punisher and the amount of power it could unleash was instantly increased.

Ning's Heaven Punisher instantly more than tripled in strength...and this was with Ning having yet to even reach the 'expert' level in soul heartforce.

"Break! BREAK!" Ning's Heaven Punisher wielded the two Ananda World-Swords with full power as he chopped downwards with them, transforming them into dazzling streaks of bloody light that transformed into a divine blood dragon. The two Immortal swords, now appearing to be two enormous bloody dragons, wildly assaulted the assaulting black chains.

The eleventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Dragons Warring in the Wild!

This stance encompassed the profound insights Ning had gained into the Dao of the Sword.

This stance encompassed the eighteen years of wild battles he had experienced in the Nihilum Zone.

This stance also encompassed all of the determination and decisiveness Ning had gained over the course of three years of war on the behalf of the Grand Xia.

All these things came together in the eleventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]...Ning's most powerful sword-art to date! Self-created skills were the best skills for one's self, because one would fully understand all the intricacies and secrets of those skills, as well as be able to unleash them to an absolutely perfect level. As for sword arts of others? Even if you mastered them, you wouldn't be able to reach a truly, absolutely perfect level in them.

True perfection was only possible for the creator!

Boom! Boom! Boom! The two Immortal swords chopped down in the form of divine blood dragons, assaulting the attacking chains.

If one watched this scene with the naked eye, it looked as though more than ten blood dragons were fighting against the countless

black chains. Prior to this, the black chains had carried an aura of unstoppable power. In the face of that power, Ning had exploded forth with his own full power. Although the chains remained intact and continued to circle around Ning, they were now no longer capable of completely binding him and causing him to be unable to fight back.

"Get in here, now!" The distant True Immortal Crimsonjoy lifted up his red jade bottle, pointing its opening towards Ning.

Rumble...

A powerful sucking force was instantly applied to Ning's Heaven Punisher.

"Hmph." Ning just flexed his knees slightly, putting himself into a stabler stance. The total amount of power he controlled had just tripled; how could the jade bottle possibly be able to absorb him away? It couldn't shake him at all! If he had been completely bound by and rendered helpless by those black chains, then the end result would have been him being sucked away, but this was no longer the case; although the chains remained powerful, he was able to fight back against them.

"What?!" True Immortal Crimsonjoy stared at Ning from afar, his face a mask of shock. "He actually...actually was hiding his own power as well? What a Ji Ning!"

In a life-and-death battle, one of the things to be feared the most was when an enemy was hiding his true power.

Only when you fully knew all of your foe's secrets could you lay down a good plan for dealing with him! If the foe was much more powerful than anticipated, the plan would be destroyed.

"Whitepole, Azurefox, hurry up and join in," True Immortal Crimsonjoy sent mentally. "This Ji Ning was hiding his full power. Even after I consumed some of my own Jindan essence, I'm only able

to temporarily keep him locked down. I'm unable to suck him away into the bottle. Now, the rest is up to you."

The Seamless Gate had made a very meticulous plan this time.

If True Immortal Crimsonjoy had succeeded, that would be well.

But if he failed...his abilities would most likely still have caused the Grand Xia's side to be put at a great disadvantage. This allowed the other members of the Seamless Gate to launch a truly ferocious strike against them! They would seize the opportunity to deal the Grand Xia a heavy blow; in fact, if the blow was heavy enough, the Grand Xia might no longer be able to fight back at all.

"Attack."

True Immortal Whitepole had been quietly preparing amidst an army of Seamless Gate soldiers within a minor world treasure. He immediately roared out the command.

Boom!

Instantly, the mighty army of the Seamless Gate appeared in the air.

Everyone appeared. The Empyrean Gods, the True Immortals, the likes of Gatemaster Azurefox...even True Immortal Whitepole himself appeared for the first time! At the same time, two types of towering, thirty thousand meter Empyrean God golems appeared as well. The first was the ordinary, often-used Empyrean God golem that was completely black and horned, the one which Ning's side had as well. As for the second, it was semi-translucent, glowed with a dull bloody light, and was slightly thinner.

Six of the old black Empyrean God golems emerged.

Sixteen of the new blood-colored Empyrean God golems emerged.

"Kill!"

"Wipe them out!"

True Immortal Whitepole's white eyebrows were fluttering about. His grim face looked even colder than usual, but his eyes were filled with madness. He gave the order coldly, and his voice echoed within the heavens.

"What?!"

"How can this be?!"

"So many Empyrean God golems?!"

The Grand Xia's side was completely stunned.

Although they had guessed that the Seamless Gate was holding back, they hadn't expected for the Seamless Gate to be holding back such a terrifying force for so long! Six black Empyrean God golems and sixteen blood-red Empyrean God golems...how terrifying a force was this?

It must be understood that the Xia Emperor himself had just barely been able to procure three such golems, and only of the black variant at that. He hadn't acquired a single one of the blood-colored golems, which were on a higher level.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Ning wielded his Ananda World-Swords, still struggling against the black chains.

The most powerful of the seven Heaven Punishers, the Darknorth Heaven Punisher, had been completely locked down!

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It wasn't just Ji Ning who was stunned. Celestial Immortal Unity and the other Heaven Punishers...even the Xia Emperor was stunned.

Upon seeing that Ning was in danger, the Xia Emperor had been extremely worried, and so he had immediately sent out his forces to

assist. Although all seven Heaven Punishers were important, the one they could least afford to lose was Ji Ning's. Ji Ning's sole Heaven Punisher was worth two or three other Heaven Punishers! In addition, once Ning overcame the Empyrean Tribulation, he would possess tremendous influence. A peerless genius who was capable of reaching the Empyrean God level of power as a Void-level Fiendgod...once he made his breakthrough, how powerful would he be?

Thus, the Xia Emperor absolutely would not permit him to be lost. He personally entered the field of battle!

But...

As soon as he appeared, before he even had a chance to help Ji Ning, he saw that Ji Ning had managed to stave off defeat by himself. "So Ji Ning was hiding his power? Excellent." The Xia Emperor was delighted and surprised.

But right at that moment...

The main army of the Seamless Gate emerged.

"What?!" When the Xia Emperor looked at the awe-inspiring horde of Seamless Gate soldiers, his face couldn't help but change.

He had guessed all along that the Seamless Gate had to have been hiding many Celestial Immortals, because three of the four White-Faced Flood Dragons had been formed from Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals that had betrayed the Grand Xia! Most likely, only the one which Empyrean God Venomsong commanded consisted of the Seamless Gate's own forces. Was that all the Seamless Gate had? Impossible!

But not even the Xia Emperor had expected so many Empyrean God golems to emerge.

"It seems they really do view my Grand Xia with great importance. They actually sent out so many of their precious Empyrean God

golems. There's even sixteen of those incredibly difficult-to-deal-with Bloodcloud golems." The Xia Emperor's gaze turned cold. "If that's the case...then let's fight."

"Empyrean God Coldsavage, Empyrean God Kindwater, Empyrean God Northwatch, emerge!" The Xia Emperor ordered.

The Xia Emperor had an extremely high status. His Grand Xia could be considered the most powerful major world under the command of Daofather Crimsonbright! He also had the Primordial Imperial Clan and Daofather Raindragon behind him, and was himself quite powerful as well. After having ruled for so many years, how could his own forces possibly be weak? It must be understood that the even likes of the Mount Stele major world, which had been conquered long ago, had three to five Empyrean Gods and True Immortals within it.

Even the likes of Empyrean God Kindwater, who had always been rather disrespectful towards the Xia Emperor, had long ago moved to stand by his side.

Empyrean God Coldsavage was the Empyrean God that had arisen amongst the ranks of the native Fiendgods of the Grand Xia. He had signed a pact with the Xia Emperor to serve him in battle for a hundred thousand years.

Empyrean God Northwatch was a transcendent figure. Much like how the Xia Emperor had helped Ji Ning out, the Xia Emperor had also once helped out Empyrean God Northwatch. Now that Northwatch was an Empyrean God, he naturally wanted to repay his debt and show his gratitude. At a critical moment like this, he chose to stand firmly on the side of the Xia Emperor.

Within an extremely vast world.

This was the world of flames where the countless Fiendgods had been imprisoned for many years. However, the world of flames no longer delivered any punishments to them. Over the past period of

time, the countless Fiendgods had all been focusing on training in a truly ancient Fiendgod formation...the Pangu War-Formation!

The Pangu War-formation was the most ancient and most complicated of Fiendgod formations.

After Pangu had established the universe and perished, all of the surviving major powers such as Mother Nuwa had felt utter veneration towards him. Back then, Mother Nuwa had been far from reaching Pangu's level. Due to the veneration the Fiendgods felt towards Pangu, as well as the gratitude they felt towards him for his establishment of the universe, many of the war-formation which the Fiendgods used when they engaged in battle ended up being named 'Pangu War-Formation'.

There were many different Pangu War-Formations, and many other major powers would often work to improve and perfect them.

In the end, Mother Nuwa had herself broken through to Pangu's level and further improved a Pangu War-Formation. Only then was it truly perfected! Only the few top-tier major powers knew all of the marvelous secrets of this war-formation, and the total number could be counted with just two hands. Amongst that number were Suiren and Fuxi of the Primordial Imperial Clan, as well as a few of the other extremely ancient Human Emperors.

The version the Xia Emperor had acquired was naturally a simplified version. However, the simplified version was more than enough for this army of mere Void-level Fiendgods and Primal Fiendgods, commanded by a single Empyrean God. They wouldn't be able to properly use the more profound versions, after all.

The countless Fiendgods were under the command of Empyrean God Coldsavage, Empyrean God Northwatch, and Empyrean God Kindwater!

They could form into three mighty Pangu War-Formations!

"Empyrean Gods Coldsavage, Kindwater, and Northwatch, make your move." The Xia Emperor's voice rang out within the world of flames.

"Time for us to act." Empyrean God Coldsavage instantly grew excited. Raising his head, he let out a heroic roar.

"FIGHT!" "FIGHT!" "FIGHT!"

Instantly, countless Fiendgods grew so excited that their eyes turned red.

They were Fiendgods. They were born to battle against Heaven and Earth; the desire to do battle was bred into the bones of each and every one of them. After having been imprisoned for countless ages, they were absolutely thirsting for a fight.

"EMERGE!"

An awe-inspiring flood of Fiendgods began to move, divided up into three armies. In the air above each army began to appear an enormous, seemingly-solid manifestation of a barefoot, loose-haired figure with an utterly enormous greataxe. This was the most ancient of primordial divinities...Pangu!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The countless Fiendgods were all teleported out of this world to the field of battle.

Chapter 19 – Consecutive Demises

Although the army of Fiendgods had quickly assembled into the Pangu War-Formations and then immediately head out, it still took a short period of time. Within that short period of time...the forces that the Seamless Gate had sent out, consisting of True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, the other Empyrean Gods/True Immortals, the sixteen Bloodcloud golems, and the six black Empyrean God golems, all began to act.

“Roaaaar!”

“Kill!”

The six black Empyrean God golems immediately charged towards their allies, moving to unite with the other eight Empyrean God golems and the three White-Faced Flood Dragons.

“The Sea of Blood is boundless...” The skinny Hallmaster of Bloodcloud Hall immediately executed his spell, causing bloody waves to began to surge forth from the area surrounding him. The seemingly endless waves of blood filled the entire region. The White-Faced Flood Dragons and Empyrean God golems of the Seamless Gate weren’t hampered by it, and were even aided by it. As for the Heaven Punishers and the five Empyrean God golems of the Grand Xia, they felt tremendously impeded by the endless waves.

“Little children...” Gatemaster Azurefox stood there in midair, her robes fluttering. She pointed off into the distance, and instantly a blurred image of an enormous, bushy, azure-colored tail appeared behind her. At the same time, countless azure strands of silk spread out from her tail, covering the skies and coiling towards the Grand Xia’s forces.

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“One withers, one blooms.” True Immortal Skyfarmer immediately went into battle-mode, a smile still on his face.

Green grass suddenly began to grow throughout the vast, desolate wilderness. The grass was merely ordinary wild grass, but it contained tremendous vitality and life energy. Despite the waves of blood and the azure silk strands that filled the region, the countless strands of wild grass still forcibly grew their way out and began to oscillate wildly in the air. All by himself, True Immortal Skyfarmer had blocked the spells of the Hallmaster and Gatemaster Azurefox.

The frenzied wild grass quickly began to wither at an astonishing rate...but then, they began to regrow just as fast. They withered and they regrew nonstop.

“Drip-drop.” True Immortal Dongyan had a casual smile on his face. Instantly, drops of water began to fall from the heavens. As the raindrops fell upon the earth, they emitted drip-drop sounds. When they landed on the forces of the Grand Xia, they caused no damage at all, but each time a raindrop struck a member of the Seamless Gate, it would carry tremendous smashing power, causing their bodies to visibly tremble.

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The Pure Yang True Immortals on both sides had executed their spells and incantations, doing their best to impede and slow down their foes while protecting their own forces.

In battle, cooperation was paramount.

If they just stupidly attacked each other blindly...neither the Grand Xia nor the Seamless Gate would be able to unleash their full power and potential. When a Pure Yang True Immortal completely focused his efforts on casting spells, he would be of tremendous benefit to their entire side.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The eighteen skinny, blood-colored Empyrean God golems all moved in utter silence, causing just a few spatial ripples with their

movements as they streaked forward like bloody rays of light.

"So fast."

"Their speed is incredible!"

"Not good."

"Their speed is at least double ours. How can this be?!" The six Heaven Punishers and the five Empyrean God golems on the side of the Grand Xia had previously been able to maintain their calm as they fought, but now they instantly began to panic.

Twice as fast? What did that represent?

It must be understood that in a life-and-death battle, if your enemy was just slightly faster than you, it meant that it would be very hard for you to escape. Twice as fast? Their foes would be able to toy with them with impunity!

"Don't panic. Although those Bloodcloud golems are extremely vast, they are very fragile! If two of you join forces to launch a joint strike, you'll be able to completely destroy a Bloodcloud golem. Even a single Heaven Punisher fighting alone will be able to damage it with an attack," the Xia Emperor sent mentally.

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on the Xia Emperor's side were all casting spells to the best of their ability, attempting to slow down the Bloodcloud golems. However, although the power of their spells was causing the Bloodcloud golems' speed to drop, the golems remained 50% faster than the Heaven Punishers!

Right at this moment...

An enormous, dense mass of figures suddenly appeared in the air. Countless Fiengods had suddenly appeared, forming together like three massive black stormclouds. Above each of the three enormous black stormclouds, there was a massive, barefoot giant who held a titanic greataxe in his hands. Their unearthly auras filled the

heavens, instantly causing the entire battlefield to grow still.

"Pangu?"

Everyone present, including the likes of Unity and Ji Ning, who had never before seen Pangu or this formation, felt inexplicably certain in their hearts that the barefoot, greataxe-wielding giants had to be Pangu.

The giant's radiated a natural, innate aura of majesty, as though everything within Heaven and Earth had to submit before it. Most likely, aside from the legendary Pangu, only Mother Nuwa was capable of such an aura.

Although the aura of the Pangu that was manifested through the Pangu War-Formation was very weak compared to the real thing, it still possessed a quality of absolute transcendence, an aura which not even Ning's master, Patriarch Subhuti, possessed.

"Hahaha..." Empyrean God Coldsavage, one of the commanders of the black stormclouds, began to laugh loudly. He stared downwards at the towering figures before him, their powerful auras filling him with a desire to do battle. "Children, we've been waiting and enduring for countless years...for far too long! Today, let's let the Seamless Gate get a taste of how formidable we Fiendgods are!"

"Let them taste our might!"

"Murder them all!"

"Wipe them all out! Eat them all alive!"

"Ahahaha!"

The countless Fiendgods all bellowed furiously.

They had been tormented for countless years, and today they were going to give full vent to their dark desires. Empyrean God Coldsavage's voice echoed within the ears of each Fiendgod.

Although the countless Fiendgods had been divided into three parts, Empyrean God Coldsavage's influence was unquestionable; he was the true and only leader of the Fiendgods native to the Grand Xia.

"Let's go."

"Kill!"

"Charge!"

The three giant black stormclouds instantly began to charge downwards with savage, killing glee.

"They are this powerful?!" The faces of True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, and the others all changed dramatically.

The intelligence abilities of the Seamless Gate were truly formidable. Word had already come from above: "The Fiendgods native to the Grand Xia have already submitted to the Xia Emperor." This single line was all they had been given; True Immortal Whitepole and the others could only do their best to try and guess at what it meant.

They didn't know exactly how powerful the native Fiendgods were, but they definitely weren't weak. As for asking their superiors for more information? They didn't dare to do that. The person who sent them these intelligence reports had an incredibly exalted status; compared to the major power of the Seamless Gate who sent these intelligence reports, even their Godking was on a lower level.

The locations of countless Celestial Tribulations.

Countless other types of intelligence reports.

That mysterious figure...it continually transmitted countless intelligence reports to them in a methodical, almost machine-like way. In terms of intelligence gathering, the Seamless Gate was supreme within the Three Realms, precisely because of that mysterious major power! There was no way that mysterious presence could possibly explain every single report in detail. How to

make use of the reports? How to take advantage of them? What actions to take? Gatemaster Azurefox and the others had to make those decisions on their own.

"It seems this war isn't going to be an easy one to fight," the Cavemaster of the Myriad Demons Cave sent mentally. "With three Empyrean Gods leading them...their power is not at all inferior to Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon."

"We still have to fight, even if it isn't easy." True Immortal Whitepole's eyes flashed with cold light. "We have to take over the Grand Xia. All those that block us must be wiped out."

"Right." Gatemaster Azurefox sent in agreement, "We have to take over the Grand Xia. The Xia Emperor really is formidable; he's one of the three chiefs of the Crimsonbright Realm. I knew long ago that attacking his Grand Xia would be very difficult...but his status makes our conquest of him even more important."

The Crimsonbright Realm referred to the dozens of major worlds and countless minor worlds commanded by Daofather Crimsonbright.

The highest ranking member of the Crimsonbright Realm was naturally Daofather Crimsonbright.

Next came the three chiefs.

Ordinary Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were ranked one level below the three.

Why were those three referred to as 'chiefs'?

The 'chiefs' of a realm usually had around ten Empyrean Gods or True Immortals who followed them! Someone who could command ten Empyrean Gods or True Immortals was naturally no ordinary figure. After Ning became an Empyrean God, he would have those seven Empyrean Gods following him, and so he could be considered a chief as well.

But of course, if he was just by himself, his status would naturally be on a lower level.

It must be understood that even someone on Lu Dongbin's level, when faced with the Seven Planets Empyrean God led by Empyrean God Redsnow, would have no choice but to flee if he was by himself. This was what made the chiefs so powerful! They are absolute hegemons below the True God/Daofather level, and if they took over a major world, their rule over it would be absolute. No Empyrean Gods or True Immortals would dare meddle within it!

Of course, Lu Dongbin was even more powerful than the Xia Emperor; he had the Eight Immortals of the High Caves by his side, as well as other followers.

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To attack and defeat the world which was governed by one of the three chiefs of the Crimsonbright Realm, the Xia Emperor...of course it was hard. But that made it even more important to succeed!

Swish! Swish! Swish!!!

The sixteen Bloodcloud golems moved at incredible speed. The three Pangu War-Formations, the Heaven Punishers, the other Empyrean God golems...none could match up to them. The Bloodcloud golems moved like streaks of light as they surged towards the six Heaven Punishers. As for Ji Ning? Ning was still locked in place by True Immortal Crimsonjoy, who was in turn occupied with locking him down through the consumption of his Pure Yang energy.

It must be understood that this was a spell that was created by Crimsonjoy consuming some of his own Jindan essence. He wasn't willing to release the spell without a very good reason, and so he had been maintaining it the entire time. If nothing else, by maintaining the spell, he was locking down the most powerful of the Heaven Punishers, Ji Ning's; that was enough.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The Bloodcloud golems wildly assaulted the six Heaven Punishers.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The terrifying flood of Fiendgods charged into the fray.

Rumble...

In the air above the dark stormcloud of Fiendgods, one of the massive Pangus swung out with an arm. The arm was many tens of thousands of meters long. One of the Bloodcloud golems tried to dodge, but was still struck by it in the end.

BOOM!

The Bloodcloud golem’s body completely blew apart in midair, all of the Celestial Immortals inside having perished from the shockwaves.

However...the Seamless Gate’s forces remained cold and clear-minded. This was the fatal weakness of the Bloodcloud golems; they were too fragile! They possessed terrifying speed, but they were easily destroyed. Each of the three Fiendgod armies were comparable to Venomsong’s White-Faced Flood Dragon, and so a full-force strike was more than enough to destroy a Bloodcloud golem. Once the golem was destroyed, the hundred Celestial Immortals within it would naturally all perish from the shockwaves.

“Careful, Rainbow!” The Xia Emperor’s face changed dramatically.

The Rainbow Heaven Punisher had just been knocked flying by Venomsong’s White-Faced Flood Dragon. Suddenly, four Bloodcloud golems pounced straight towards it!

The Bloodcloud golems were simply too fast.

Although the Xia Emperor and the others were all present, by the

time they noticed the danger...

Slash! Slash! Boom!

The massive Fiendgod body of the Heaven Punisher was completely ripped apart, revealing the many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals within.

Chapter 20 – The Grand Xia’s Worldguard Formation

The Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals fled like mad.

“Hahahaha...”

“Fleeing?”

“Die!”

The four Bloodcloud golems butchered the surviving Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals. In the past, when a Heaven Punisher was destroyed by a White-Faced Flood Dragon, only a single one of them would be available to butcher the survivors. Now, however, four Bloodcloud golems were massacring them together! Although the Bloodcloud golems were somewhat weaker than the White-Faced Flood Dragons, they were much faster and possessed more than enough power to effortlessly murder these Celestial Immortals. Given that there were four of them...in but the blink of an eye, all one thousand Celestial Immortals were completely wiped out!

Not one of them escaped!

Even those who hid themselves within Immortal estates were immediately captured by those Bloodcloud golems.

“Damn.” Empyrean God Kindwater let out a furious roar as he led his massive Fiendgod army in an attack.

“Rainbow!”

“Sixth!”

“Sixth brother!”

The eyes of the other Heaven Punishers became bloodshot.

It had all happened too fast.

Previously, when they encountered dangerous situations while battling against the White-Faced Flood Dragons, the Xia Emperor and the others would have enough time to intervene and help out. However, when the Rainbow Heaven Punisher suffered attacks from four Bloodcloud golems, there wasn't even a chance to rescue them. The Rainbow Heaven Punisher was shattered in the blink of an eye, and in the next blink its Immortals were all massacred. It was far, far too fast.

.....

"Sixth brother." Ning's eyes were bloodshot as well. It had all happened too fast. No one had been able to intervene.

"Damn."

Ning brandished the Ananda World-Swords with his two hands, wildly assaulting the black chains around him. The distant True Immortal Crimsonjoy continued to strive to maintain the spell. Grinding his teeth, he thought to himself, "This Ji Ning really is a madman. He knows he can't break out, but he continues to attack in such wild fashion." His Pure Yang energy was continuing to deplete, while Ning was using up even more natural energy of Heaven and Earth.

"True Immortal Crimsonjoy." Ning felt greater and greater hatred.

The power of these black chains was simply tremendous...

Ning truly wanted to ask the seven Empyrean Gods to come out. Given that the Grand Xia and the Seamless Gate were roughly on par, they could strike a decisive blow that would change the entire tempo of this war. However, the seven had only promised to help him out a single time. This was equivalent to providing Ning with a second life, if they were used to save him at a critical moment. In addition, even though Ning was truly enraged, his mastery of heartforce had reached the ruler level, and so he was able to remain completely calm; he wouldn't act rashly due to his rage. The seven

Empyrean Gods would be a tremendously powerful card to play; now was not the time to play them.

This was because the battle between the Grand Xia and the Seamless Gate clearly had not reached the climax yet!

"If..."

"If I were to master the Dao of the Sword...how wonderful that would be?"

"Break apart, damn you!"

Ning continued to use his sword-arts to frenetically assault the black chains, making it so that they were completely unable to coil around him.

.....

The three Fiendgod armies were the most savage and most berserk forces on the side of the Grand Xia. The Pangu War-Formations possessed enormous, astonishing power. They were also utterly gigantic, with their hands alone being greater than the Heaven Punishers in size. Thus, sometimes the Bloodcloud golems found it difficult to avoid the mighty palms and greataxes of the Pangus, even though the golems were very fast.

Whether they were struck by axes or by palms, the Bloodcloud golems would instantly shatter apart, the Celestial Immortals inside perishing.

Boom!

Boom!

Every so often, an enormous explosion would be heard as yet another Bloodcloud golem perished.

True Immortal Whitepole watched from far away, a cold look on his

face. Although he had expected that he would lose many of the Bloodcloud golems, the rate at which they were being destroyed in this battle against the Grand Xia was far too fast! This was mainly because the three Pangu War-Formations took up far too much space. Although they were somewhat slower in moving and advancing, they were still extremely fast when striking with their arms and greataxes.

"Hmph." A cold light flashed through True Immortal Whitepole's eyes as his gaze locked onto the Fiendgod army led by Empyrean God Coldsavage.

Whooooooooosh! Suddenly, thirty-six snow-white Immortal swords appeared behind True Immortal Whitepole. These thirty-six Immortal swords joined together, forming into an enormous circle in midair. Power exploded forth from them, as the thirty-six Immortal swords transformed into an enormous Solar Star, but one that radiated an aura of icy coldness.

A billowing cold. A penetrating, bone-deep cold.

Even the vast wilderness began to quickly freeze as a layer of frost appeared on everything.

"He's finally making his move." The Xia Emperor had been keeping an eye on True Immortal Whitepole this entire time. He had been able to sense the threat which Whitepole posed to him; in fact, Whitepole was the only person on the side of the entire Seamless Gate alliance that gave the Xia Emperor a feeling of danger. Thus, the Xia Emperor understood that True Immortal Whitepole, who had always been so low-key, was the most powerful member of the Seamless Gate.

Although the Xia Emperor had cast some supportive spells as well, he had mainly been focusing on True Immortal Whitepole.

Now that True Immortal Whitepole was making his move, his move was sure to be shocking.

“Whitepole’s World!” True Immortal Whitepole was at the very center of this icy sun, as though he was its master. He then pointed at the distant Fiendgod army led by Empyrean God Coldsavage.

Swish!

A freezing lance of light instantly shot through the skies, flying straight towards Empyrean God Coldsavage’s army.

Empyrean God Coldsavage raised his head, letting out a savage bellow.

Instead, the towering Pangu figure above his Fiendgod army also let out a furious roar as it swung its greataxe. BOOM! Although a layer of frost appeared on the surface of the greataxe, the attack was still blocked.

“Hmph.” True Immortal Coldsavage smirked.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Instantly, countless lances of silvery-white light shot through the air, assaulting the Fiendgod army of Empyrean God Coldsavage. The area around the Fiendgod army transformed into an icy hell-trap. Even space itself began to freeze, and a layer of ice appeared on the towering body of Pangu as well. However, all of the Fiendgods roared in response, summoning their divine power to resist.

All of their power had been fully merged together; they were completely fearless.

“RAAAWR!” Empyrean God Coldsavage went berserk. The Pangu above him cleaved downwards with the greataxe, using its terrifying power to block the countless lances of light.

.....

For now, this Fiendgod army had been completely stalemated by True Immortal Whitepole.

"Formidable."

"A single Pure Yang True Immortal, all by himself, is actually able to stalemate a Pangu War-Formation led by an Empyrean God commanding countless Fiendgods." The forces of the Grand Xia were shocked. It must be understood that nobody on the side of the Grand Xia dared to claim that they could single-handedly stop the White-Faced Flood Dragon led by Venomsong. Even the likes of Empyrean God Firecloud, who had once managed to tie down Venomsong's Terrorbeast, had been sent flying with each clash.

But True Immortal Whitepole had done it!

"Perfect." The Xia Emperor's eyes lit up. "This is the moment."

Rumble...

The empty space around the black-robed Xia Emperor seemed to implode. With him at the center, an area of three hundred meters around him became covered in absolute darkness. The space within this region began to collapse, twist, and swirl about. And then, from the field of absolute darkness, a black dragon began to crawl outwards. When this black dragon emerged, it blinked its golden eyes and stared at its surroundings.

"ROAAAAR!" An earth-shaking draconic howl.

And then, one black dragon after another came crawling out of the field of absolute darkness.

"Dawn of All Creatures!" The black-robed Xia Emperor growled out, his gaze turning savage.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A total of nine black dragons came crawling out from the darkness, filled with auras of tremendous power. They then began to sinuously slither forward, moving at high speed as they assaulted the distant Bloodcloud golems.

This was a secret art that the Primordial Imperial Clan never taught to outsiders. At his current level of power, the Xia Emperor was just barely able to use the first level of this technique. If it were the major powers of the Primordial Imperial Clan who used this art, they would be able to release ten thousand black dragons at once.

“Azurefox, go help those Bloodcloud golems.” Seeing the situation, True Immortal Whitepole immediately sent a mental message. He was quite shocked upon seeing the Xia Emperor use this secret art. It must be understood that his intelligence reports hadn’t included a list of all techniques which the Xia Emperor used. As for this secret art, the ‘Dawn of All Creatures’, it was incredibly difficult to learn, and the Primordial Imperial Clan never taught it to outsiders. He hadn’t expected that the Xia Emperor would actually be able to use the first level.

Those nine black dragons were comparable to nine Empyrean God golems, and incredibly fast ones at that! Once the Bloodcloud golems were tied down, then the two active Fiendgod armies and the various Heaven Punishers would be able to destroy them with ease.

“Alright.” Seeing the situation, Azurefox didn’t dare hesitate; she immediately went all out, transforming into an enormous azure fox.

The azure fox stood there in the air, blue light billowing from its body.

“Transform.”

Her tail suddenly divided from one tail into nine tails. The nine enormous azure fox tails suddenly blasted out in each direction, chasing after those nine black dragons. Gatemaster Azurefox wasn’t actually one of the legendary nine-tailed foxes, the most exalted of all foxes. As an Empyrean God, however, she could temporarily change into a nine-tailed form, although her power was still a bit weaker than that of the true, legendary nine-tailed foxes. Still, she was able to die down the Xia Emperor for a time and give the Bloodcloud golems some breathing space.

If she was a true nine-tailed fox, and an Empyrean God at that, she'd probably be able to rely on her natural abilities alone to give the Xia Emperor a run for his money.

In reality...she wasn't quite there yet.

.....

The imperial capital of the Grand Xia. The main hall of the imperial Skylight Palace.

The white-robed Xia Emperor stood at the highest point of the Skylight Palace, staring down at the vast world.

"Thus far, the Seamless Gate has sent in less than ten thousand Celestial Immortals into battle, including the ones already killed. They've mainly been relying on their Empyrean God golems and their Bloodcloud golems, which is why they've been able to stalemate my Grand Xia." The white-robed Xia Emperor murmured softly to himself, "These ten thousand Celestial Immortals...three thousand of them joined them from my Grand Xia. In other words, the total number of Celestial Immortals that originally belonged to the Seamless Gate was actually even less, perhaps only around six or seven thousand. And this can't be the full power the Seamless Gate possesses. To assault my Grand Xia...the Seamless Gate led by Azurefox must have prepared many Celestial Immortals!"

"Since you aren't willing to bring them out...I'll force them out."

The white-robed Xia Emperor knew quite well that if a dagger remained hidden in the darkness, it might appear at any moment in a lethal strike. Only by forcing the dagger out into the open could he feel at ease.

"Arise."

The white-robed Xia Emperor reached out with his right hand, spots of glimmering black light appearing with it.

Rumble...

The entire Skylight Palace...in fact, the entire imperial citadel...began to shake. The runes and ley-lines of the plaza that had existed for countless years began to glow, and the Skylight Palace itself began to be covered with dazzling, flowing black light.

.....

Stillwater City.

Although the Grand Xia was at war, the ancient city of Stillwater was quite calm. This wasn't the place where the war was going on.

But suddenly...

The entire Stillwater City began to shake.

Rumble...

The entirety of Stillwater City suddenly began to glow with light. The countless rays of light circulated in the air above Stillwater City as an aura of absolute might soared into the heavens.

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Flamedoor City saw the same pillar of light surge into the skies.

.....

Countless cities throughout the 3600 commanderies of the entire Grand Xia suddenly began to unleash an unearthly amount of power. This power was even beginning to emanate from Whitepole City, which was located directly below the Seamless City.

The Skylight Palace of the imperial citadel as the core, and the 3600 capitals of the various commanderies as the formation-bases. Long ago, Daofather Raindragon had personally crafted the Grand Xia's Worldguard Formation...and now, it had been truly activated. This was a formation which the Xia Emperor had asked Daofather

Raindragon to create after the marquis-led rebellions. Ever since its creation, no one in the Grand Xia had ever dared to rebel again... until this time, that is.

After countless years of silence, the Grand Xia's Worldguard Formation was once more revealing its might.

"Go." The white-robed Xia Emperor stood guard at the Skylight Palace over the core of the Worldguard Formation, summoning its power and sending it towards the field of battle in Whitepole Commandery.

Chapter 21 – Pulling Out All The Stops

Whitepole Commandery. The vast, wild field of battle.

The battle between the Seamless Gate and the Grand Xia had reached a fever point, with both sides comparable in power.

The Grand Xia's Darknorth Heaven Punisher and the Seamless Gate's True Immortal Crimsonjoy had tied each other down.

As for the other five Heaven Punishers and five Empyrean God golems of the Grand Xia, they were being assaulted by the two White-Faced Flood Dragons, six Empyrean God golems, and Bloodcloud golems of the Seamless Gate. Those Bloodcloud golems in particular...they moved in unfathomable, mysterious ways, causing the five Heaven Punishers to suffer greatly. Fortunately, the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were assisting them.

The Xia Emperor, in particular, was able to lock down more than half of the Bloodcloud golems; otherwise, more Heaven Punishers would have fallen by now.

The most powerful force on the side of the Grand Xia was the three Fiendgod armies.

However, one of the armies had been stalemated and locked down by True Immortal Whitepole, while the other was engaged in battle against the White-Faced Flood Dragon. The final one was being assaulted and completely tied down by eight of the Empyrean God golems of the Seamless Gate. Unlike the Bloodcloud golems, the black Empyrean God golems were a bit slow, but were very tough to destroy, and so they managed to render this Fiendgod army unable to do anything to them.

.....

For the moment, both sides were battling at a furious stalemate. Neither side was able to destroy the other; both sides needed

additional reinforcements to disrupt the balance and wipe out their foes!

Of the six Heaven Punishers, Ji Ning was feeling the most miserable, because he had been completely locked down by True Immortal Crimsonjoy.

“Eh?” Ning suddenly sensed a powerful ripple of natural energy. He couldn’t help but look towards the skies. And not just him; everyone present could sense that terrifyingly powerful ripple of energy, and raised their heads to stare at the skies.

Rumble...

A terrifying power was gathering within the air, manifesting in the form of a dark-red cloud. It was like a tribulation cloud, filled with flickering red light and with power great enough to strike fear into the hearts of the viewers.

“The Worldguard Formation!”

“That’s the Worldguard Formation!”

“The Xia Emperor has activated the Worldguard Formation.”

The Seamless Gate’s forces felt their hearts clench, while the Grand Xia’s side felt excitement.

The fame of the Grand Xia’s Worldguard Formation was simply too great. Even Ning had heard of it long ago, back when he had taken part in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. However, back then he hadn’t been certain as to exactly how strong it was. Afterwards, when his status became higher, he learned some details and particulars of this formation. The Grand Xia’s Worldguard Formation was led through the imperial Skylight Palace and supported by the 3600 commandery cities. The power of the 3600 cities would be gathered in one location, but the energy could be used to attack any location within the Grand Xia!

When the tribulation cloud appeared, space would be locked. There wouldn't even be a way to escape!

As for its power...

Celestial Immortals would definitely perish. As for Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, Empyrean Gods with powerful bodies and protective divine abilities might be able to survive, but Pure Yang True Immortals were almost guaranteed to perish! The power of this formation vastly outstripped the Xia Emperor's own power. It was precisely because the Worldguard Formation was created that the various marquises no longer dared to ever rebel again. So long as they were within the world of the Grand Xia, there would be no way for them to avoid the attacks of the Worldguard Formation.

They were unable to forget...that time when they saw the Worldguard Formation release its power. It had immediately slain the leader of the rebels, a Pure Yang True Immortal known as True Immortal Quhai.

"It's about time." True Immortal Whitepole raised his head, watching with a cold smile on his face. In his hands, however, a gray fruit suddenly appeared. He crushed the gray fruit with his hand.

Whoooosh! Suddenly, a large amount of gray gas flew out of the gray fruit. Instantly, the vast flood of gray gas began to soar into the heavens, wrapping itself around the dark-red tribulation clouds in the air!

"Eh?" The Xia Emperor frowned, then smiled coldly and barked, "The power of primordial chaos? Whitepole, do you think that a tiny bit of chaos power, diluted into gaseous state, is capable of withstanding my formation?"

The power of primordial chaos...

You had to begin training in the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos before you could slowly begin to learn to master it. This was truly the

most supreme form of power that existed within the Three Realms. Generally speaking, after True Gods or Daofathers mastered a single Heavenly Dao, they would then begin to slowly work on understanding the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos. After all, of the ten great Heavenly Daos, the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos reigned absolutely supreme. Anyone capable of mastering it would reach the supreme level which Pangu had been at.

Long ago, Pangu had mastered this Heavenly Dao. Mother Nuwa was even more formidable; of the ten Heavenly Daos, she had mastered nine of them!

There was a saying that there were 108,000 Daos in the universe.

Mother Nuwa had mastered 84,000 Daos.

From this, one could see how incredible she was!

It wasn't that Mother Nuwa couldn't master the final Heavenly Dao, it was that the Heavenly Daos themselves were flawed and incomplete. There was no way at all to completely and thoroughly understand all of them at the same time. Mastering nine Heavenly Daos was a limit!

"Haha, I admit that your Worldguard Formation is formidable, and this truly is just a sliver of chaos power." True Immortal Whitepole laughed loudly, a hint of satire in his eyes. "But even though it is just a sliver...it's a sliver of primordial chaos! How much power will this formation of yours possess, after it is forced to go through it? In addition, given how powerful this Worldguard Formation is, and given that it covers your entire major world and vastly surpasses the level of power a True Immortal should possess...I imagine that each time you activate it, you have to pay a considerable price."

The Seamless Gate had received intelligence reports about it.

Every century, the Xia Emperor could at most use the Worldguard Formation twice. True Immortal Whitepole had personally asked his master about this, and the Godking had said, "This formation is so

vast, it goes beyond the bounds of normal power for Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. An attack that can encompass and envelope an entire world...this is something on the level of a True God or a Daofather. The main reason why Raindragon forged this formation was to shock and awe."

"Since even the intelligence reports say that the Xia Emperor can at most use this formation twice every century, then I imagine that he should normally only be able to use it once. If he's willing to pay an enormous price, he can probably use it twice. I'll bestow upon you a fruit of primordial chaos which can weaken the strength of his formation."

.....

"Hmph." The Xia Emperor stared downwards coldly.

The tribulation cloud of the Worldguard Formation previously held enough power to slaughter any of the True Immortals of the Seamless Gate that were present. The Empyrean Gods might have been able to survive the strike of the tribulation cloud, thanks to their divine bodies and protective divine abilities, but the True Immortals were almost guaranteed to perish. The Xia Emperor had been planning on using this to assault True Immortal Whitepole, but now that the tribulation cloud was covered by the power of primordial chaos...most likely, the strength of the tribulation cloud would be greatly weakened after passing through it!

It was easy to beat back an expert on the level of True Immortal Whitepole, but very hard to kill him.

Empyrean Gods and True Immortals all had very formidable life-preserving techniques.

"I knew that the Seamless Gate had to have prepared something, but I didn't imagine that the Daofather behind True Immortal Whitepole would actually give him a Dao-fruit of primordial chaos. This Daofather is quite generous." The Xia Emperor felt tremendous

resentment. Fruits of chaos power were also known as Dao-fruits of primordial chaos.

Not all True Gods or Daofathers could easily condense the power of primordial chaos into the form of a fruit. If they really could do that, given that they could easily replenish their own chaos energy, Dao-fruits of primordial chaos would be everywhere.

In reality...to form a Dao-fruit of primordial chaos, the creator had to materialize, then slice off a sliver of his own insights into the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos. Only then could the Dao-fruit survive on its own. Thus, these fruits contained only an extremely tiny amount of chaos power. A tribulation storm was sweeping the Three Realms. Although the major powers of the Seamless Gate might be willing to sever a portion of their insights into primordial chaos for the sake of increasing their side's karmic luck, they would only be willing to part with a very, very tiny amount of it. If they severed just a little bit, given enough time they would be able to train back to the same level. But if they severed too many of their insights...it would be incredibly hard to regain them in the future.

A tiny sliver of chaos power was already more than enough to weaken the tribulation clouds.

"Go." A cold light flashed through the Xia Emperor's eyes.

The tribulation cloud in the skies suddenly transformed into a rainbow of light that shot downwards.

Crackle...

The gray gas crackled as it blocked part of the energy. It was just the manifestation of a tiny amount of chaos power; although it was qualitatively on a superior level, its power was depleted in the blink of an eye. The rainbow of light, originally more than three hundred meters thick, had been whittled down until it was nearly thirty meters thick. It now only possessed a tenth of its former power, but it moved lightning fast.

Swish!

One of the White-Faced Flood Dragons that was battling against the Heaven Punishers suddenly let out a roar of terror and rage as it raised up its claws to block.

BOOM!

The rainbow of light pierced straight through it, punching a hole in its chest. Quite a few Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals inside the Terrorbeast were slain, and the Terrorbeast itself was instantly destroyed. The Immortals inside were utterly terrified, and they immediately sought to flee.

“Kill!”

The Unity Heaven Punisher that was closest to it naturally moved to massacre the survivors.

The distant True Immortal Whitepole, however, just watched this happen coldly. All of this was within the realm of his expectations. For hundreds of Celestial Immortals to die as a result of the activation of the Grand Xia’s Worldguard Formation was an excellent bargain. If it hadn’t been for the Dao-fruit of primordial chaos, he himself probably would’ve perished from the attack! The power of that formation was simply far too frightening; it contained power that was close to that of a Daofather’s!

“Xiamang, now that you’ve used even the Worldguard Formation, I imagine you only have the Raindragon Guard left.” True Immortal Whitepole sent a mental laugh to the Xia Emperor. “You are guaranteed to lose this fight.”

“You can all come out now!” True Immortal Whitepole suddenly let out a loud roar.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Suddenly, four towering figures appeared out of nowhere. Four

additional White-Faced Flood Dragons, their auras soaring into the skies! These four White-Faced Flood Dragons appeared uncontrollably savage and utterly ferocious.

"What?!"

"Four more?"

"Four more White-Faced Flood Dragons?"

The Grand Xia's forces felt their hearts sink.

Good heavens.

A single White-Faced Flood Dragon represented a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals. This meant the Seamless Gate had just sent out four thousand more Celestial Immortals! And it was hard to say how strong these Terrorbeasts were; perhaps some of them were comparable to Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon in power!

"Seamless Gate, you honor me with your caution." The Xia Emperor let out a cold laugh. "Since you wish for the Seamless Gate to come out...then I'll grant you your wish."

Whoosh.

Instantly, an incomparably massive divine dragon appeared in midair. This divine dragon was rather special. Compared to ordinary divine dragons, it differed in that it had a pair of enormous wings. This was the appearance of the legendary Godbeast, the 'Raindragon'. Daofather Raindragon was a Godbeast, born with tremendous power. After experiencing that great war of the Primordial Era, he had ended up becoming a True God and Daofather.

"ROAAAAR!" The enormous Raindragon instantly charged downwards.

"Haha, come!" One of the White-Faced Flood Dragons let out a frenzied roar as it moved to engage.

BOOM! BOOM!

The Raindragon began to battle against that White-Faced Flood Dragon. Although the Raindragon held the slight advantage, the White-Faced Flood Dragon was still more than enough to tie it down.

"What? That White-Faced Flood Dragon is actually that powerful? It has to be that an Empyrean God or True Immortal is commanding it." Ji Ning and the others felt their hearts turn cold.

Their Raindragon army was only comparable to a single one of those extra-powerful White-Faced Flood Dragons.

As for the other three...would one of them also be that strong? If that was the case, they would be in huge trouble.

The Xia Emperor coldly watched as this all occurred. He knew very well that this battle against the Seamless Gate would be a hard one, because the Seamless Gate's intelligence network was simply far too powerful. They knew all the forces the Xia Emperor had, but he knew nothing about the Seamless Gate's forces. He had already revealed all of the power he had available...but from the looks of it, he was still at a disadvantage.

"Xiamang, your defeat is guaranteed. The Grand Xia shall now be the Grand Xia of me, Whitepole. Wait...it won't even be called the Grand Xia any longer. Its name should be changed to the Whitepole major world." True Immortal Whitepole was filled with an imposing aura, and he had an incomparably arrogant demeanor to him.

Chapter 22 -

Breakthrough, Pure Yang True Immortal

[collapse]

Atop a mountain that hovered within the vast Void outside the Three Realms.

This towering mountain was a million kilometers long. This was the abode of Daofather Crimsonbright.

An old man with long azure hair was seated in the lotus position. Below him stood a large group of powerful Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, a clone of the black-robed Xia Emperor among them.

“That Fiendgod army is finished.” Daofather Crimsonbright let out a soft sigh.

A round mirror of light was hovering in the air, allowing them to view the results of the battle. Daofather Crimsonbright had personally cast this technique.

“It’s finished.”

“One of the three Fiendgod armies is about to be used up.”

“If this continues...”

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all incredibly nervous. As for the clone of the black-robed Xia Emperor, he just watched with an icy look on his face.

“Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, our major worlds were all defeated...can it be that your Grand Xia is going to be defeated as well?” A burly Empyrean God who had the head of a bear spoke out anxiously.

“Our side has lost some Fiendgods, true, but Empyrean God

Coldsavage is still alive, at least." The Xia Emperor said coldly, "Our losses aren't that severe, and the Seamless Gate has lost eight of their Bloodcloud golems."

"Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, no need to be reluctant to admit to the truth," the nearby Sword Immortal Evergreen said calmly. "By now, I imagine you must be able to see that the Seamless Gate has clearly seized the upper hand. As this battle continues, your side will suffer even heavier losses! Although the Seamless Gate has lost eight Bloodcloud golems, the eight of them caused you to lose a Heaven Punisher and a Fiendgod army. The strong will grow stronger, while the weak will grow weaker; the distance in power between you and the Seamless Gate will continue to grow, until the end comes where your Grand Xia is unable to keep fighting and completely collapses!"

The Xia Emperor frowned.

Sword Immortal Evergreen's words were unpleasant to hear, but he spoke the truth.

True Immortal Whitepole of the Seamless Gate had been tying down the Fiendgod army led by Empyrean God Coldsavage, and so when the new White-Faced Flood Dragons arrived, Whitepole had immediately ordered them to assault Coldsavage's Fiendgod army. An entire host of Bloodcloud golems had thrown themselves into the fray as well. They had focused all of their extra power on that single Fiendgod army.

Just a short while later...after suffering the loss of four Bloodcloud golems, making for a total of eight losses in this battle, the Seamless Gate succeeded.

The only thing the Xia Emperor had been able to do was to take out a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, a red gourd, and draw all of the fleeing Fiendgods into his gourd. However, there were still many Fiendgods who ended up being massacred by the Bloodcloud golems.

"Am I going to lose?" The Xia Emperor sighed to himself.

Right now, the only idea he had was to ask his master, Crimsonbright, for help. He could also ask for Daofather Raindragon or the Primordial Imperial Clan to intercede.

However, the entirety of the Three Realms was in quite an ugly state. Would the Daofathers be willing to intercede and send out their own forces? The Xia Emperor didn't feel certain of the answer. Daofather Crimsonbright and Daofather Raindragon had to know of his need, but whether or not they would help out...that was their decision.

"If Master, my big brother, and the Primordial Imperial Clan all refuse to intervene, then this war will have been lost." The Xia Emperor was unwilling to accept this outcome.

He truly was not.

This was a world which he had established. It was the foundation he had built after he had set up his Xiamang clan. Was he now going to be kicked out, like sorry-looking mutt being beaten off by a stick?

"Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang still has a very important military force on his side." A muscular, golden-eyed man dressed in dragon robes looked towards the midair mirror of light, pondering to himself. "The most powerful Heaven Punisher, the one Ji Ning leads. All by himself, he can deal with two White-Faced Flood Dragons at the same time. However, he's been forcibly restrained by True Immortal Crimsonjoy. Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, those black chains trapping Ji Ning...is there no way to break them?"

"There's no way." The Xia Emperor shook his head, resigned. "Both sides are battling all out right now; the amount of help we can provide Ji Ning is limited. Unless we can send out an overwhelming amount of power, there's no way we can break through those black chains."

"What spell is that? How can it be so powerful?"

"Right, those black chains...I've never even seen such a spell."

"Nor have I."

"They seem like the black chains that are anchoring the Seamless City in the air, but I always thought that those were just part of that war-city. I didn't expect that there was a similar sort of spell as well."

The many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals present had been gathered here from the dozens of major worlds commanded by Daofather Crimsonbright.

They collectively possessed tremendous experience, but none of them had ever seen this.

The Xia Emperor just closed his eyes.

This was agony.

He didn't want to take another look. His true body was within the field of battle; he knew exactly what was going on. The situation was turning increasingly grim. The enemy was strong, while his side was slightly weaker...which meant that the enemy would reap further and further rewards, causing the disparity in power to grow until one side perished.

"Master...big brother...what are you thinking, right now?" The Xia Emperor groaned mentally to himself.

"Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, this Ji Ning...is he the one you wanted me to take on as an apprentice, all those years ago?" Sword Immortal Evergreen suddenly asked.

The Xia Emperor gave him a glance. "Yes."

"I completely forgot about that." Sword Immortal Evergreen laughed, "I just remembered...I heard that this Ji Ning took on a Daofather as his master. As the disciple of a Daofather...although he's merely a Celestial Immortal and a bit weak, he's still been an extremely useful

general under your command."

"He might be a Celestial Immortal, but he's not weak." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "He's trained for a very short period of time, after all; his potential is truly extraordinary."

"Potential?" Sword Immortal Evergreen said calmly, "There are many in the Three Realms with tremendous potential who have nonetheless been trapped at the Celestial Immortal stage for countless years. It's not so easy to become an Empyrean God or a True Immortal!"

The Xia Emperor's face sank. This junior apprentice-brother of his, Sword Immortal Evergreen...if one wanted to put it nicely, he was a figure who transcended worldly concerns, but if one wanted to put it bluntly, he was incredibly selfish! He didn't care about the feelings of his fellow disciples at all; he said what he wanted to say, not caring about their face at all. In a normal situation, everyone was magnanimous about it, but this was during a time of war, and the Xia Emperor's Grand Xia was about to be destroyed.

Although Evergreen's words were true...why did he have to insist on saying such depressing things? Didn't he know that the Xia Emperor had a belly full of fire right now?

"Oh?" The Xia Emperor said calmly, "Then junior apprentice-brother Evergreen, when you were merely a hundred years old, had you already become a Celestial Immortal?"

Sword Immortal Evergreen's face instantly changed, but he then smirked. "What's the point of putting up a tough verbal façade? Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, it's time to face reality."

The Xia Emperor was currently in a terrible mood. He couldn't be bothered to reply.

"The Grand Xia..."

The Xia Emperor felt miserable in his heart. "Is it really finished?"

.....

As Daofather Crimsonbright led his Empyrean Gods and True Immortals in watching the battle from outside the Three Realms, a massive, black-robed figure was also silently watching from a completely different location. The Godking was paying very close attention to this fight.

“We are going to win.”

The Godking gently tapped on his armrest with his left hand. A mirror of mist was in front of him, revealing the battle in its entirety.

.....

At this moment, neither the Godking nor Daofather Crimsonbright could see inside the body of Ning’s Heaven Punisher. None of them could see the change in Ji Ning, Immortal Darknorth.

Within the world of the Grand Xia. Whitepole Commandery.

The savage battle had been kicked in overdrive as both sides assaulted each other with abandon. The Seamless Gate’s side was especially eager, while the Grand Xia’s side clearly seemed a bit dispirited. Everyone could tell that from the moment that the Fiendgod army led by Empyrean God Coldsavage was destroyed, the difference in power between the two sides had grown. The Grand Xia was almost unable to hold on any longer.

“Break! Break! Break!”

Ning, trapped by those black chains, felt a frantic feeling in his heart.

His heart was filled with rage as well.

Why...

Why couldn’t he break these damned chains?

His brothers and sisters were fighting for their lives. Ning truly was

anxious to join them.

Despite his anxiousness, he was still able to maintain complete control over himself. His icy calmness and his frantic impatience co-existed without any conflicts at all.

Rumble...

Suddenly, Ning's heart shook.

He was stunned.

And then...he was overjoyed.

He could now completely sense that vast, boundless Grand Dao, the Dao of the Sword. All of the mysteries of the Dao of the Sword were now within Ning's heart. It was different from the past; when Ning was attuning to the Dao, enormous ripples would manifest. Now, the Dao of the Sword was like an obedient little child, not resisting or hiding anything from Ning.

This was because Ning had completely mastered and was in complete control of it. Naturally, he wouldn't release even the slightest of Dao-ripples to the outside world unless he chose to.

"So this...is the Dao of the Sword?"

"So the only thing I lacked was a surge of true Sword Immortal ki?" After breaking through the final bottleneck, Ning instantly understood where his problem had lain.

In truth, when one reached a bottleneck in mastering a Grand Dao, one's insights into that Grand Dao were almost complete and perfect.

The only thing that was lacking was the final merging and fusing of all those insights, to blend them all together into one thing...the entire Dao of the Sword.

This sort of fusion required an insight that was extremely difficult to comprehend. However, Ning had a very pure sword-heart, and had even mastered a strand of swordforce. In addition, he had once had a chance to personally sense the entire Grand Dao of the Sword, thanks to the [Thousand Year Dream]. Thus, the only thing Ning lacked was that final surge of ki, the Sword Immortal ki which every single peerless Sword Immortal possessed.

Every single Sword Immortal had their own special qualities to them.

Lu Dongbin was transcendent and non-interventional.

Sword Immortal Evergreen was supremely self-centered, viewing everything through the cold lens of pragmatism. He didn't deign to cloak his words in pleasantries when dealing with people of the same level. He knew that his words were unpleasant to hear, but he didn't care. Perhaps he might be respectful when in the presence of a Daofather, but he couldn't be bothered to do so for other Empyrean Gods and true Immortals. He knew very well the thing which mattered the most to him was his own strength.

Ji Ning, sword in hand, chopped through all thistles and thorns that sought to bar his path as he walked towards the true peak of power. Although he knew everything, simply put, Ning was missing that final surge of ki.

However, Ning had been tempered and trained through years of battles. In fact, black chains were surrounding and assaulting him right now, giving him tremendous pressure. As a result...the pressure caused a rebound effect, allowing Ning to seize the opportunity to make a breakthrough.

Upon making the breakthrough...

The look in Ning's eyes changed.

Although his eyes looked similar to how they did in the past, deep within them one could see a sword-intent that was absolutely

harrowing.

"The Dao of the Sword is now complete!"

"As for manifesting the five types of ki within my chest...I've always been able to do that," Ning murmured to himself.

What were the five types of ki? Metal, wood, water, fire, earth; the Five Elements! The most important part of a Celestial Immortal becoming a Pure Yang True Immortal lay in the mastery of a Grand Dao. A secondary component was in separately mastering five ordinary Daos of the Five Elements. These Daos of the Five Elements could allow one to link together with the infrastructure of Heaven and Earth, because the Three Realms were themselves formed from the Five Elements.

When manifesting the five types of ki within the body, one would receive a resonance with the essential Five Elements of the universe itself. After the Jindan absorbed an enormous amount of elemental energy, it would then evolve and transform into a Pure Yang Jindan. Only then would it possess Pure Yang power, allowing one to become a true Pure Yang True Immortal.

"We're in a fight right now. I don't have the time to slowly absorb elemental energy." Ning immediately pulled out an enormous amount of Pure Yang Immortal pills, throwing all of them into his mouth. Right now, his Jindan needed to absorb a nigh-infinite amount of elemental energy, and so there was no worry at all about an accidental self-detonation due to excess power.

Chapter 23 – The Power Of A Pure Yang True Immortal

Rumble...

The elemental energy contained with Pure Yang Immortal pills was of incredible purity. It instantly transformed into a tidalwave of elemental energy within Ji Ning's Jindan region. The energy of each pill was completely released, and the entire Jindan drank it all up thirstily, as though it was starving for energy. It was like a riverbed that was so dry, the ground had cracked; even if a torrent of rain was to fall onto it, the riverbed would be able to easily absorb it all.

In fact, the rate at which the Immortal pills released energy couldn't even catch up to the rate at which the Jindan was absorbing it.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Within Ning's chest, five types of semi-transparent ki began to manifest and flow.

These five streams of ki came from the insights Ning had in the five Daos of the Five Elements. They now all gathered together, connecting Ning to the essence of Heaven and Earth itself.

Ning had trained for many years. Aside from the Dao of the Sword, his accomplishments in the Grand Dao of the Waterdrop were the most advanced. He had mastered more than half of it by now. As for ordinary water-related Daos, he had long since mastered sixteen different types. In truth, mastering ordinary Daos was now of very little help to Ning. While working on his Grand Dao, he would occasionally get a flash of insight that would allow him to master a particular ordinary Dao.

Ning was very skilled in fire-related Daos as well.

Metal...Ning was quite skilled in this as well, thanks to his expertise in the sword.

Earth...this was the slowest for Ning to train in, but Ning had still mastered a complete, ordinary earth-related Dao. Even back when Ning had first arrived at the Black-White College, he had begun to train in the Lesser Five Elements sword-art, after all.

"Wonderful." The five types of ki within his chest were slowly beginning to link together and resonate with the essence of the Five Elements within Heaven and Earth, causing tiny streams of energy to be transmitted into his body.

These streams of energy consisted of the essence of the Five Elements. They were all transmitted straight into Ning's Jindan.

Whoosh!

Like celestial snow meeting with infernal flame, an explosive transformation erupted. Ning's Jindan began to completely transform, and its quality was increasing at an incredible rate. The Jindan region within Ning's body grew even greater, and the energy that created and maintained the Jindan grew more and more pure as it began to rise towards the Pure Yang level. Although an enormous amount of elemental energy was being used up, Ning had plenty of Immortal pills prepared. Ning had acquired a large number of Immortal pills from the Xia Emperor, when he had traded away his Empyrean God golem. Even after mastering the Sixth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], Ning had a large number of Immortal pills left over.

Although all of this took time to describe, in reality it happened tremendously fast.

After just two breaths worth of time, Ning's Jindan had successfully completed its transformation into an even purer, deeper, and somewhat darker golden color! This was a darkness that came from density and depth, and the energy within this Jindan now vastly surpassed the energy contained within the Jindan of a Celestial Immortal. It caused Ning's Celestial Immortal body to instantly be transformed.

The golden pellet Jindan within Ning's body was now a Pure Yang Jindan.

It was second only to the Great Firmament Jindan possessed by Daofathers of the Great Firmament. The Pure Yang Jindan continued to absorb the remaining energy from the Immortal pills, causing the power of the Jindan to grow even heavier and denser.

"Eh?" Ning immediately used the spell which his master, Subhuti, had taught to him. He masked his Pure Yang aura, transforming into the aura of a Celestial Immortal.

This was a form of artifice.

In battle...Ning needed to disguise his power.

"What a wonderful feeling. The feeling of being a Pure Yang True Immortal...it truly is powerful! Pleasurable!" Ning could sense the might his body contained as the Pure Yang power flooded his body. "Is this the feeling which Patriarch Lu and the Xia Emperor have?"

Patriarch Lu and the Xia Emperor were both Pure Yang True Immortals.

Celestial Immortals had their energy, Pure Yang True Immortals had their own.

The transformation in their energy alone represented an enormous increase in power. In fact, Ning even had the feeling that right now, if he were to attack by himself without a thousand Celestial Immortals or a hundred thousand Loose Immortals aiding him, he would still be able to give a White-Faced Flood Dragon a good fight. In the past? His Primaltwin, merely a Celestial Immortal, had to rely on the power of the entire army.

"The Darknorth army..." Ning immediately activated his Pure Yang energy, beginning to take control of even more power from the entire Heaven Punisher formation.

His power grew deeper and deeper. The power of the entire Heaven Punisher began to skyrocket. It doubled. Tripled. Quadrupled. Quintupled.

The power continued to increase. Ten times. Twelve times. Eighteen times. Twenty-one times!

Finally, the power of the Heaven Punisher reached a limit, and the increase came to a halt.

"Eh? Why is it that I have the feeling that I've almost brought out all the power this Heaven Punisher has to offer?" Ning had a foundation of Pure Yang energy, and had a soul heartforce technique supporting him; as a result, he was in control of almost 80% of the total maximum theoretical power of a Heaven Punisher! Ning could vaguely sense that he was very close to a hard limit in power.

It must be understood that not even the other Empyrean Gods or True Immortals were able to unleash this much power from a single Heaven Punisher! Not Empyrean God Venomsong, for example, nor the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals.

Although there were some Empyrean Gods and True Immortals in the Three Realms who had gained insight into heartforce, the overall ratio was low; it could be said that less than one in ten practiced heartforce! For example, in this current battle within the Grand Xia, aside from Ning, there were two others who had gained a basic level of expertise into heartforce.

One was the Xia Emperor, who had reached the second stage in heartforce.

The other was Gatemaster Azurefox, who had also reached the second stage in heartforce.

The most important thing was, even someone who had powerful heartforce had to come up with a way to apply it to the soul as well. Ning was incredibly talented in this regard; previously, all by himself,

he had come up with a way to apply it to his sword-fingers, then had come up with a way to apply it to actual Immortal swords. After being transmitted the [Heart Sutra] by Old Man Yuan, he had slowly begun to reach towards a way to apply heartforce to the soul.

.....

A Pure Yang True Immortal whose heartforce had reached the peak of the third stage, and who had a basic level of expertise in soul heartforce.

This was the reason why Ning was able to command eighty percent of the maximum power of the Heaven Punisher?

It could be said that Ning was now far, far superior to anyone else on either side in terms of controlling a Heaven Punisher. Even when he was a Celestial Immortal, Ning was capable of giving Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon a good fight; he was just slightly weaker than it, that was all.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning's Heaven Punisher brandished the Ananda World-Swords, chopping down against the black chains.

He still used the same amount of power he had in the past, before making his breakthrough.

But Ning now had a feeling...that if he was to unleash his full power, the black chains would be completely unable to stop him.

"Eh?" Ning swept the field of battle with his gaze. "The current situation is extremely unfavorable towards the Grand Xia. From the looks of things, if no one else arrives to help out, the only result will be a defeated retreat."

"Because my breakthrough was within the Heaven Punisher's body, most likely no one knows of it."

"Then..."

Ning stared at the distant True Immortal Crimsonjoy.

True Immortal Crimsonjoy had been maintaining this spell the entire time. This used up a shocking amount of energy, and so he had been constantly using Immortal pills to replenish it.

"Ideally, I should kill True Immortal Crimsonjoy in a single blow," Ning secretly calculated to himself. "Even though I should currently be the most powerful figure on this battlefield, it's still quite hard to actually kill a Pure Yang True Immortal."

The supreme powers on this field of battle were the Fiendgod armies, Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon, and the Raindragon army. Of course, the Xia Emperor and True Immortal Whitepole were on this level of power as well.

Both the Xia Emperor and True Immortal Whitepole were very powerful in and of themselves. As for Empyrean God Coldsavage, Empyrean God Kindwater, Empyrean God Venomsong, and the others, they all had to rely on armies in order to release this level of power.

Ning, by himself, was naturally no match for the Xia Emperor or True Immortal Whitepole.

However, he had the Darknorth army, heartforce, and a soul heartforce technique. This made his Heaven Punisher the most powerful force present, vastly stronger than Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon.

"Right now, not a single Empyrean God or True Immortal has perished. Not even the Xia Emperor's usage of the Grand Xia's Worldguard Formation was enough to kill one of them." Ning knew very well that killing one would be very hard, but he had to give it a try.

.....

On this battlefield, the Xia Emperor and True Immortal Whitepole

were the field marshals for their respective armies.

"Is it all over?"

The Xia Emperor stared at the field of battle. Daofather Raindragon, Daofather Crimsonbright, and the Primordial Imperial Clan...none of them had sent reinforcements. The Xia Emperor felt powerless.

He now understood...

That his master and the others probably had other concerns, precluding them from reinforcing him. The Xia Emperor, however, still found it hard to accept this.

"Retreat," the Xia Emperor ordered in a hoarse, unwilling shout, one which rang out by the ears of everyone on his side.

Rumble...

The enormous Eight Dragons Cloudcity began to appear as well, pressing downwards.

"Hurry and retreat into the Eight Dragons Cloudcity," the Xia Emperor ordered.

"Imperial Majesty."

"Imperial Majesty?"

They all looked towards the Xia Emperor.

The Xia Emperor, however, just shook his head. He didn't want to admit it, but he could tell that their defeat was guaranteed! There was no way for them to change the situation! If this continued, the Grand Xia's forces would probably be completely destroyed.

"Forget it...forget it. If I lose, I lose. There's never been such a thing as an eternal empire within this universe. Even my Primordial Imperial Clan...its current status cannot compare to its status during the Primordial Era." The Xia Emperor sighed mentally, completely giving

up. He would no longer fight. It was time to prepare to flee. If they fled, they would at least stay alive. If they continued to fight head-on, death would be the result.

I, Xiamang, have done all I can...

But alas, I have nothing more to give, now!

He couldn't forget he had arrived within this world with high spirits, roaming across it and nurturing it, defeating all challengers until he finally unified the entire Grand Xia. He felt deep attachments towards this world of his, but alas...it was now time to leave. This world would now belong to the Seamless Gate.

"Hahaha...don't let them just escape like that. Kill them all!" True Immortal Whitepole roared with laughter. He felt utter excitement, right now, because he could sense that the Xia Emperor no longer had any plans to fight back and was most likely going to escape.

This world's name was going to be changed to the Whitepole major world.

He...would be its master!

If Xiamang wishes to flee, he needs to first consider whether or not I, Whitepole, shall permit it!

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" True Immortal Whitepole's eyes were filled with a shocking desire to kill, and the morale of the Seamless Gate's forces swelled up to a crescendo.

But suddenly...

BOOM!!!!

A strange explosion.

This explosion came from a part of the battlefield which had been fairly calm and silent this entire time. It was the place where Ning's

Heaven Punisher had been trapped. Although the Xia Emperor wanted to rescue him, it was currently hard for them to even save themselves; how were they supposed to send out even more forces to rescue Ji Ning?

"Eh?" The Xia Emperor, True Immortal Whitepole, and the others all turned their heads to look.

The black-robed, black-haired, red-eyed elder just stood there in a daze. Around him, snow-colored lotus flowers were flying about.

The elder touched his chest.

The Pure Yang Jindan within his body...had been shattered in an instant, under a sudden, sinister assassination strike by Ji Ning.

The red-eyed elder opened his mouth, wanting to say something... but before he could make a single sound, he transformed into flying dust. He had died!

After so many years of battling to claim the Grand Xia...

A True Immortal had finally died! True Immortal Crimsonjoy had perished! The killer was a Heaven Punisher...Ji Ning's!

Chapter 24 – Withdrawing The Troops

The Grand Xia and the Seamless Gate; both forces on that battlefield were stunned.

The Grand Xia had already begun a retreat, while the Seamless Gate was in hot, eager pursuit, planning on carving a few extra pieces of flesh from the Xia Emperor.

But...

True Immortal Crimsonjoy died?

An exalted, powerful Pure Yang True Immortal...had actually died?

“What the hell?”

“How did Ji Ning DO that? He...wasn’t he trapped? Even if he managed to charge out, how could he have killed True Immortal Crimsonjoy in an instant?”

“Just now, I seemed to see snow-white lotus petals floating around True Immortal Crimsonjoy’s body. Could his death be connected to the Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the ‘Nineleaf Snowlotus’?”

The Seamless Gate’s forces were completely stunned. They simply couldn’t believe this.

They were clearly on the verge of victory...how did the hell did this suddenly happen?

.....

The only person on the battlefield who wasn’t stunned was Ning himself.

“Success.” Ning let out a sigh of relief. Although he had an absolute advantage in power thanks to his Heaven Punisher, he hadn’t been certain that he would be able to kill True Immortal Crimsonjoy.

Just now, he had first activated his Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the Nineleaf Snowlotus.

The Nineleaf Snowlotus was best-suited for trapping and binding foes. In the past, Ning was a mere Celestial Immortal; even when he used the power of the Heaven Punisher to activate the Nineleaf Snowlotus, it wouldn't be excessively powerful. After becoming a Pure Yang True Immortal, however, and after merging his Pure Yang energy with the power of his Heaven Punisher, then using it all to activate the Nineleaf Snowlotus...the power of the countless snowlotuses he could create was truly astonishing.

He had instantly covered the completely unprepared True Immortal Crimsonjoy with them.

As he used the snow-white lotus petals to surround True Immortal Crimsonjoy, Ning unleashed his full power, instantly shattering apart the entangling black chains.

"Not good." Upon being trapped by the snowlotuses, and upon sensing his spell being destroyed, True Immortal Crimsonjoy immediately knew that something bad was happening. A sudden variable had to have been introduced into the battle, but he couldn't see what was going on beyond the barrier of snowlotuses, nor could he Greater Teleport. He didn't dare hide himself within an Immortal estate either; if he did, the enemy would be able to immediately capture it.

Thus, the only thing he could do at the time...was to use his own Pure Yang treasures to protect himself.

BOOM!

A cold, insidious sword attack.

After shattering the black chains, Ning immediately sent out a silent, soundless sword-strike. This was an assassination sword-art which Ning had learned back at Mount Innerheart. He had learned far too

many sword-arts at Mount Innerheart, including several that had been devised by Daofathers of the Great Firmament. Usually, it was rare for Ning to use any of those sword-arts, as those were sword-arts that others had developed; although they were very powerful in Ning's hands, there was no way he could truly reach a level of absolute perfection in them. Ning, however, had never tried to create his own assassination sword-arts. Given the inconceivable power of the Heaven Punisher he led, this sword-art was already powerful enough. And so...

BOOM!

The snow-white lotus petals instantly split apart, allowing Ning's sword to hack directly against True Immortal Crimsonjoy's protective magic treasure.

Because True Immortal Crimsonjoy had been trapped by the snow-white lotus flowers, his protective treasure's defensive field was very, very close to his body. This assassination sword-art Ning employed was a type of vibration-based sword-art. When he chopped down, a very strange yet incredibly powerful form of energy was transformed into a vibration that not even Pure Yang magic treasures could block. The vibration was sent straight into True Immortal Crimsonjoy's body...and it instantly shattered apart his Pure Yang Jindan.

From this, one could imagine how powerful Ning's sword-attack had been.

In truth, someone like True Immortal Crimsonjoy would've never dared to fight Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon, one of the Fiendgod armies, or the Raindragon army head-on. Ning was much more powerful than any of the three; how could Crimsonjoy possibly resist it? And in truth, Ning was lucky to possess the Nineleaf Snowlotus. If it wasn't for the Snowlotus binding Crimsonjoy, when Ning charged over Crimsonjoy would've fled right away.

If Celestial Immortal Blackheaven knew that Ning had used the Nineleaf Snowlotus, a treasure which had previously belonged to

Blackheaven himself, to cut off the escape path for True Immortal Crimsonjoy, who Blackheaven had asked to help out...

It really would be hard to describe how Celestial Immortal Blackheaven would feel.

.....

"Seize the momentum. Kill!"

While he celebrated his victory, Ning didn't hesitate in the slightest as he immediately charged straight towards the closest enemies.

There were three White-Faced Flood Dragons of the Seamless gate in that location, as well as a group of Empyrean God golems. They had been assaulting the five Heaven Punishers of the Grand Xia, who per the Xia Emperor's orders were retreating while supporting each other defensively. At this moment, however, everyone had come to a halt. They were all stunned, and the forces of the Grand Xia felt wild joy in their hearts.

"Not good!"

"Quick, go help out!"

"Go help them!"

On the Seamless Gate's side, True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox were the first to come back to their senses. They didn't have any time to be astonished at True Immortal Crimsonjoy's death; they immediately began to give orders.

True Immortal Whitepole first changed the target of his spell to focus on Ning. The icy Solar Star that was hovering in the skies behind him began to shoot rays of frozen light towards Ning's charging Heaven Punisher.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Cold light flashed in an unending stream.

"Hmph." Ning's Heaven Punisher was bounding barefoot across the land. After having seen True Immortal Whitepole use this spell before, Ning felt no fear at all. He swung out an Ananda World-Sword, his sword-light flowing like water. Ever since Ning was young, he had been particularly adept at using sword-arts to defend. The curtain-like flow of watery sword-light was able to completely block all of the frozen lances of light.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The tremendous power within Ning's words were able to endure all of the attacks.

"I can't stop him." True Immortal Whitepole's face changed. "Quick! Junior apprentice-sister Azurefox, go help out. The Heaven Punisher which Ji Ning is in command of is far too powerful. I was able to stop even a Fiendgod army, but I can't stop him!"

"Alright." Azurefox was anxious as well.

Both of them were fairly distant from Ning. There was no time to charge in and attack him up close; their only options were to use spells, magic treasures, and other long-distance options.

Nine bushy fox-tails lashed through the air, seeming to blot out and darken the skies themselves as they swept towards Ning.

"Just f*ck off." Ning's Heaven Punisher continued to bound forward, two swords in his hands. Previously, he had used just a single sword to block True Immortal Whitepole. Now, he used the other sword as well. Boom! Boom! Boom! When his sword struck out, it was as though the heavens had suddenly turned clear and bright again. The nine furry tails were blasted apart, leaving just a small portion of the tails undamaged. Quickly, however, the nine tails once more grew outwards and regenerated.

Ning didn't slow down at all...and he was far too fast.

The Fiendgod armies, the Heaven Punishers, the White-Faced Flood Dragons, the Raindragon army...none of them were comparable to Ning's Heaven Punisher in terms of speed! In fact, even the Bloodcloud golems were just barely on par with Ning's speed right now. From this, one could tell how terrifyingly fast Ning truly was!

"Quick, go save them!"

"Stop that Ji Ning!"

"Quick!"

True Immortal Whitepole frantically issued the orders. Ji Ning's sudden, explosive increase in power was absolutely capable of changing the outcome of this entire battle. If they weren't able to slow him down and allowed him to just charge forward as he currently was...no army, Empyrean God, or True Immortal was capable of fighting against Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher without assistance. The forces of the Seamless Gate would most likely be destroyed by Ning, one at a time...resulting in a defeat for this entire battle.

Thus, they had to focus all of their efforts on stopping him!

Whoosh!

Sword-light struck out.

The three White-Faced Flood Dragons were fleeing now, with the five Heaven Punishers in hot pursuit, as well as Ning's Heaven Punisher. As Ning's sword-light flew out...the White-Faced Flood Dragon he targeted only had a chance to let out a furious, unwilling roar of defeat. Slash! Ning's longsword chopped straight through the neck of the White-Faced Flood Dragon, sending the head flying. The body of the dragon immediately broke apart, revealing the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals inside of it, who immediately began to flee.

"Kill! Kill! KILL!" Celestial Immortal Unity, Celestial Immortal Whacko,

and the others all led their Heaven Punishers in a massacre of the survivors.

"Go!"

"Stop him!"

BOOM!

Another massive explosion could be heard. A tremendously powerful White-Faced Flood Dragon had managed to force its way in front of Ji Ning. This was Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon, which had been nearest to Ning. Venomsong struck out with the sharp, fierce claws of his dragon, while Ning once more swept out with the Ananda World-Sword.

BOOM!

This was the first time these two massive Fiendgod-manifestations had fought head-on.

Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon was actually knocked off its two scaly legs by the force of the collision and sent flying backwards. This result caused a look of utter shock to appear on the face of Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon! He...he was actually... this much weaker than Ji Ning?

"But..." True Immortal Whitepole's face completely changed.

Previously, upon seeing Ning's might, he had made a rough estimate of Ning's power and had expected Ning's Heaven Punisher to be stronger than Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon. But to actually knock Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon flying like that...this was beyond his expectations. The difference in power was enormous!

"Slow him down."

He had no time to be astonished. True Immortal Whitepole and

Gatemaster Azurefox both focused their spells against Ning, and both their spells were extraordinarily powerful. Ning had to use at least one sword at all times to defend against them. With two of them joining forces against him...Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon had more than enough time to recover from that blow, then once more charge forward to engage Ning in battle.

And so, True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, and Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon all joined forces to just barely stalemate and tie down Ji Ning. Just barely! Ning was still able to charge forward; he was just somewhat slowed down.

"Retreat!" True Immortal Whitepole had an ugly look on his face as he mentally roared the order to his forces.

They couldn't allow this fight to continue.

They had already lost True Immortal Crimsonjoy and a White-Faced Flood Dragon. Ji Ning, all by himself, was able to tie down Whitepole, Azurefox, and Venomsong. The Seamless Gate no longer had any advantages whatsoever.

The Seamless Gate's forces began to retreat.

Before this, the Seamless Gate had a significant tactical. After True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, and Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon had joined forces to tie down Ji Ning, their forces were no longer in significant danger, and so they were able to retreat in a very stable, orderly manner.

Soon, this sudden, unexpected 'final battle' came to an end.

"Withdraw our troops." The Xia Emperor's voice rang out as well, once more filled with vigor and willpower.

The war for the Grand Xia...

He hadn't lost it yet!

The Xia Emperor stared at the distant, awe-inspiring, half-nude Heaven Punisher commanded by Ji Ning. In his heart, he celebrated joyfully, and he even felt a hint of gratitude towards Ji Ning. Ji Ning truly had been the fulcrum upon which the results of this battle had turned.

.....

Beyond the Three Realms. The seat of awakening for Daofather Crimsonbright.

Aside from Daofather Crimsonbright himself, a whole host of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were watching the battle scenes depicted within that mirror of light.

"Good!"

"That's Ji Ning!"

"He just exploded with power."

"True Immortal Crimsonjoy just died. He actually died, just like that."

"Look, he's still charging forward. He's incredibly ferocious; he's just smashing straight through them. The Seamless Gate is panicking now. True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox have both used their spells, but they can't stop him. They can't stop him at all! The White-Faced Flood Dragons have started to flee. It's useless! They are too slow. Ji Ning just attacked with his sword...ahaha! One of them died! Ugh, Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon just arrived...this is going to be a bit troublesome...he was just sent flying?"

The mood had been rather depressed, but now all of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals felt their energy levels rising.

They were all excited.

Some of their homelands and major worlds had already been conquered, after all. Even the ones that weren't conquered yet felt

grief upon seeing the Grand Xia fall into such dire straits. If even the Grand Xia had fallen...how could they hope to survive? Most likely, only extremely selfish individuals like Sword Immortal Evergreen, who didn't have any major worlds or territories to worry about, would be completely unconcerned with the results of this battle.

"How can Ji Ning be this powerful? Can it be that he's become a Pure Yang True Immortal?"

"He's too strong."

"His aura is simply..."

Everyone was sighing in amazement. Who wouldn't hope for a brutal, dominating figure like Ning to appear on their side during a battle?

The Xia Emperor's clone just stood there, smiling. Smiling with great happiness.

He glanced sideways at the nearby Sword Immortal Evergreen, who had a rather unpleasant look on his face. Evergreen had said quite a few things just now, after all.

"Fortunately, junior apprentice-brother Evergreen, you weren't able to take Ji Ning on as your disciple all those years ago. Otherwise...you really would've delayed his progress," the Xia Emperor sighed 'emotionally'.

"You...!" Sword Immortal Evergreen's face sank. He immediately began a retort; he wasn't the sort to easily admit defeat.

But suddenly, Daofather Crimsonbright, seated above all of them on his throne, let out a loud, clear laugh. "This Ji Ning...good, very good!"

The words which Sword Immortal Evergreen was just about to spew out became stuck in his throat. He wasn't able to say a single thing.

Chapter 25 – Requesting Reinforcements

The many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals below Daofather Crimsonbright looked towards him.

“Years ago, I once had the chance to take on this Ji Ning as my disciple, but of the three choices that were made available to me, I choose Little Woodpass.” Daofather Crimsonbright smiled, seeming to be in an excellent mood. “I felt certain that Little Woodpass would have more potential than Ji Ning, but it seems that my vision has grown blurry with age.”

“Uh...”

All of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were speechless.

To praise Ji Ning was one thing; after all, he had indeed completely changed the situation in that battle at the Grand Xia. But for the Daofather to say that his ‘vision has grown blurry with age’ was a bit exaggerated. What sort of a status did a Daofather have? Even if he truly did wish to satirize himself a bit, for him to satirize himself for Ji Ning’s sake was quite bizarre.

“In the end, it was that old friend of mine who had superior vision.” Daofather Crimsonbright pointed towards the air, and yet another mirror of light appeared out of nowhere. The images of yet another battle appeared on that mirror, one in which more than a hundred Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were participating in, alongside true dragons, Fiendgods, phoenixes, and other mythical beasts. The two sides in the battle were battling with ferocity. Daofather Crimsonbright said calmly, “The final battle between the Winesun Realm and the Seamless Gate has reached the crescendo.”

Everyone below watched the battle carefully.

The Winesun Realm was the dozens of major worlds and countless minor worlds ruled over by Daofather Winesun. It was a realm that was not inferior to the Crimsonbright Realm at all.

"The Winesun Realm has actually sent nearly eighty Empyrean Gods and True Immortals into battle?"

"Look; those eighteen True Immortals have joined together into a Ninesongs Formation. They must be close to a Daofather in power."

"They are going quite berserk."

"Even the phoenix lineage has descended."

This was a great battle, one which was far more vicious than the one the Grand Xia had just engaged in.

As the Xia Emperor watched this battle, he suddenly understood everything. Right...as he was feeling misery for the Celestial Immortals and the Loose Immortals who had perished under his command, the exalted Daofathers were watching things on a much higher level. During such a violent tempest as this one which had swept the Three Realms, the deaths of Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals simply wouldn't cause too much of a reaction from the Daofathers. Only the deaths of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would arouse the attention of the True Gods and Daofathers.

In the eyes of the Xia Emperor, his losses had been unsustainably catastrophic. In the eyes of the Daofathers, however...the battle in the Grand Xia had resulted in comparable losses for both the Xia Emperor and the Seamless Gate. Things had yet to reach a truly dire state.

"This great storm is one which has swept the entire Three Realms. In the end, it will cause many True Gods and Daofathers to perish...and to think, I was about to give up so easily? It seems that I've been living a comfortable life for far, far too long...just the slightest setback was enough to make me feel despair and a desire to retreat," the Xia Emperor mused to himself.

"Xiamang." Suddenly, a voice rang out within the Xia Emperor's mind.

The Xia Emperor couldn't help but raise his head to look. The

speaker was Daofather Crimsonbright.

"The battle for the Grand Xia has just started," Daofather Crimsonbright sent mentally. "The Seamless Gate has only sent a small portion of its forces; the assault is mainly being led by the Gatemaster Azurefox's Seamless Gate. That is why none of us were in a hurry to intervene. If the Seamless Gate lets it go, then we'll let it go as well. But if they are to summon their forces and attack en masse, then we will assist you."

The Xia Emperor instantly grew excited.

"But of course, if you aren't even able to withstand the limited forces which Azurefox has brought out from her branch of the Seamless Gate, then you have no one to blame but yourself," Daofather Crimsonbright sent mentally. "You can only blame yourself for not working hard enough, for not even being strong enough to force Azurefox's branch to request reinforcements."

"Understood." The Xia Emperor nodded.

When he thought back...

Indeed, he, Xiamang, hadn't been ruthless enough.

He hadn't been ruthless enough to his subordinates. He hadn't been willing to let any of his Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, or Heaven Punishers to perish. But in a real life-and-death war, sacrifices sometimes had to be made. The more you tried to ensure that none of your people died, the more likely it was that you would fail. The Seamless Gate, for example; they had essentially sent many of their Bloodcloud golems into certain death, but the Bloodcloud golems had been very successful. The deaths of just eight of those golems had resulted in them slaying a Heaven Punisher and a Fiendgod army. This sort of mindset, of going all out even at the risk of your own death, could indeed be astonishingly successful.

He hadn't been ruthless enough to himself either. He hadn't been

willing to use up a large amount of his own Jindan essence in activating the Grand Xia's Worldguard Formation a second time, because if he had, his white-robed Primaltwin wouldn't have been able to recover for a very long period of time.

"The Seamless Gate needs to engage on multiple battlefronts, fanning the flames of war throughout the entire Three Realms," Daofather Crimsonbright sent mentally. "Their forces are limited. Although their intelligence reports provided them with a rough estimate of the power of your Grand Xia and allow them to make some arrangements, they can't waste too much of their power either. If it hadn't been for the fact that three thousand Celestial Immortals of the Grand Xia had been seduced into their service, they actually would've been at a disadvantage in manpower compared to you."

"The highest level members of the Seamless Gate have ordered their subordinates to go all out."

"You...need to go all out as well."

"Some Celestial Immortals may die; even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals may die. So what? This is a tribulation, a true storm. If we can kill seven or eight of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Seamless Gate in exchange for just losing four or five of ours, it would be worth it; it would be a great victory." Daofather Crimsonbright's voice caused the Xia Emperor to feel rather stunned.

Killing a thousand foes while losing five hundred allies; this would be considered a tremendous victory.

"In the midst of a storm, you need to be awakened as to how to behave within it. When the Primordial World was destroyed, you were very weak and so did not take part in the battle; you have no idea how terrifying these great storms can be. This is just the beginning...because that old bastard has yet to fully awaken." Daofather Crimsonbright sent mentally, "Once that old bastard truly awakens, this storm will reach its crescendo. By then, Empyrean Gods and True Immortals will be like ants, and a large number of

True Gods and Daofathers will perish."

"Your disciple erred." The Xia Emperor now completely understood.

He had to be ruthless.

Ruthless to his subordinates.

Ruthless to himself.

Only then could he survive this storm!

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, there was a joyous celebration.

The Fiendgod armies, Raindragon army, and Heaven Punisher armies were all sent back to their quarters.

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth, it is very rare for me, Floatwater, to admire someone...but I truly admire what you did this day." After the Raindragon army was dissolved, a willowy maiden dressed in black armor came flying out from it. She was a Pure Yang True Immortal.

"Respectful greetings to you, True Immortal Floatwater," Ning said. He was still pretending to be a Celestial Immortal.

"No need for such courtesy. In fact, in terms of leading and commanding a thousand Celestial Immortals and all those Loose Immortals, you are actually superior to me." True Immortal Floatwater gave Ning a close look. "To tell the truth...I even suspect that you've already become a Pure Yang True Immortal."

Ning just chuckled.

"Ji Ning."

"Darknorth."

One delighted voice after another rang out. It was Unity, Allbeasts,

Whacko, Rainsoar, and Dustfloat.

Ning looked at his four sworn brothers and sworn sister, both joy and grief in his heart. He felt grief because his sixth brother, Rainbow, had already perished.

"Alas...sixth brother didn't have a chance to see it."

"Rainbow, he..."

As the six of them reunited, they quickly turned sorrowful.

"There will always be deaths in war." The black-robed Xia Emperor flew over, a group of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals by his side. It was Empyrean God Kindwater, Empyrean God Coldsavage, Empyrean God Firecloud, True Immortal Skyfarmer, and True Immortal Dongyan.

"Imperial Majesty." Ning and the rest of the six all hurriedly saluted.

"This time, many Celestial Immortals, Loose Immortals, and even Fiendgods perished. Rainbow was just one of them," the black-robed Xia Emperor said. "This is just the start of this great storm. We should all understand that even more of us will die."

Ning and the others all understood this point. Subhuti had spoken to Ning of this as well. These two great alliances were both seeking to destroy the other.

"However..." The black-robed Xia Emperor looked at Ning, revealing a smile. "Hahaha, Ji Ning, you truly gave me a wonderful surprise. Haha, I had even given an order for us to temporarily withdraw...but who would've thought that you would bring me such a wonderful surprise? You even killed a Pure Yang True Immortal!"

Temporarily withdraw? It most certainly was not! Back then, the Xia Emperor had wanted to completely flee from the Grand Xia and admit defeat.

"Right now, the advantage lies not with the Seamless Gate; it lies with us, the Grand Xia!"

The Xia Emperor looked at his allies, his laugh loud and clear. "Right now, the biggest headache the Seamless Gate has is addressing the question of how to deal with Ji Ning. True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, and Venomsong's White-Faced Flood Dragon had to all work together in order to just slightly slow him down; they aren't able to completely tie him down. I imagine that they'd have to send out yet another Empyrean God or True Immortal in command of a White-Faced Flood Dragon to accomplish it."

"Hahaha..."

"That would make things much more relaxed for the rest of us. We can slaughter them." The Grand Xia also had the Raindragon army, the two Fiendgod armies, as well as five Heaven Punishers and multiple Empyrean Gods and True Immortals.

The entire atmosphere within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity became much more relaxed.

Slaying a Pure Yang True Immortal was definitely a great success.

.....

The Seamless City.

The atmosphere here was very gloomy.

"Crimsonjoy died."

"How could this have happened?"

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all gathered within the main palace. Everyone, including True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox, had ugly looks on their faces.

Although they had killed a few Celestial Immortals and Loose

Immortals of the Grand Xia, they had also lost many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals; their losses were actually fairly comparable.

Most importantly of all...

They had lost one of their Pure Yang True Immortals.

"What should we do?"

"The Heaven Punisher under Ji Ning's command suddenly became incredibly powerful. Just now, Whitepole, Azurefox, and Venomsong's Heaven Punisher had to join forces against him, but he was still able to charge forward. We no longer have enough power to win this war. If this continues, we'll be in danger of actually losing it. As I see it... we need to request reinforcements."

"Right. Request reinforcements."

"We don't have enough strength left."

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals all spoke out in favor.

Gatemaster Azurefox, however, had a dark look on her face. She snapped coldly, "Request reinforcements...do you think it will be that easy? The Godking has a hundred Seamless Gates which have been assigned to conquer many major worlds. Some of them are now permanently stationed on already-conquered major worlds. Every single Seamless Gate is in desperate need of additional forces, of more power. Who doesn't want reinforcements? But if everyone wants reinforcements...it will be hard for anyone to actually get it."

Everyone fell silent for a time.

Their alliance's total military power, compared to the Nuwa Alliance, was still weaker.

Otherwise, they wouldn't have had to use all sorts of enticements and underhanded methods.

Fortunately, they had an absolute advantage in terms of intelligence reports. As the saying goes, only when you know your enemy and know yourself can you be the victor in all your battles. In a war, intelligence was tremendously important. It was thanks to their intelligence reports that the Seamless Gate had been able to create so many problems for the Nuwa alliance. In truth, the Seamless Gate's power was already stretched very thin. To request reinforcements? It would be difficult.

Last time, the Godking had taken out a Dao-fruit of primordial chaos for them to deal with the Grand Xia's Worldguard Formation, but had not given them any additional reinforcements.

"Azurefox, things are different now. Ji Ning is a new variable, a major new variable in this equation."

"Right. Report it to the Godking."

.....

Ning's display of power had been too great. He had caused the Seamless Gate to sense that if things were to continue, they would probably lose disastrously no matter how hard they fought.

Gatemaster Azurefox fell silent.

True Immortal Whitepole looked towards her as well. Although he had also taken on the Godking as his master, Azurefox was closer to the Godking than Whitepole was, and she was the Gatekeeper of this Seamless Gate. True Immortal Whitepole was nothing more than the temporary military commander for this campaign against the Grand Xia.

"Fine. I'll report it to the Godking," Azurefox said heavily.

Requesting reinforcements...Azurefox felt very ashamed for being forced to resort to this.

Chapter 26 – The Godking's Decision

Within a private room.

A single candle had already been lit. A fragrant smoke was drifting about, filling the entire room. Azurefox was seated in the lotus position, and she slowly closed her eyes, gradually entering the realm of slumber and dreams.

.....

Azurefox appeared within the vast world of darkness. At the center of the world of darkness, a towering figure suddenly appeared atop a towering throne that was at least thirty thousand meters tall, a figure that was covered in black robes.

"You lost?" The Godking looked downwards calmly, his voice reverberating within the entire world.

"Forgive me, Godking." Azurefox immediately fell to her knees. She said hurriedly, "We've already done everything we can, and everything unfolded as we expected, but...who would've thought that Ji Ning, who clearly was just a Celestial Immortal, would become the most powerful force on the side of the Xia Emperor? It is very taxing for us to withstand just his Heaven Punisher alone. We truly have no other options..."

The Godking just looked at her silently.

Azurefox knelt there, not daring to lift up her head.

"I was watching the battle between you and the Grand Xia this entire time," the Godking said calmly. "Ji Ning's rate of improvement truly is quite fast...but in addition to that, each of you were cowardly and feared for your lives. Whitepole, in particular...has truly disappointed me! I bestowed a Dao-fruit of primordial chaos upon him, but he still wasn't able to gain victory."

"Forgive us, Godking," Azurefox said nervously.

The Godking strummed his throne's armrest with his hand, having fallen silent.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

The only sound in the entire world was the sound of him tapping against his armrest, and it echoed nonstop within the darkness.

Azurefox didn't dare to make a sound. She knew that the Godking was pondering...was deciding.

To reinforce them? Or to not reinforce them?

.....

Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The entire situation had been reversed, and they had gained a major victory. The Xia Emperor had just summoned his Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and Celestial Immortal commanders to the main hall to engage in a discussion.

Within the military camp of the Darknorth army.

"That really felt excellent."

"I felt so stifled for so long, trapped by those black chains. Immortal Darknorth was truly formidable; he actually led us to break those chains apart and kill that so-called 'True Immortal Crimsonjoy'. We even killed that White-Faced Flood Dragon and sent the Seamless Gate scurrying."

"He's simply incredible. Not even the Heaven Punishers controlled by an Empyrean God or a True Immortal can be this powerful."

The Celestial Immortals and the countless Loose Immortals within the camp all chatted excitedly amongst themselves. The amount of power their Heaven Punisher had suddenly wielded in the end was

incredibly stimulating to them.

"Rainbowflame Fairy."

"Fairy."

Upon seeing Yu Wei pass by, all of them were very respectful. They all knew that Yu Wei and Ji Ning were Dao-companions, and the bulge in Yu Wei's belly was already quite noticeable. Everyone could tell that she was pregnant. The child within Yu Wei's belly most likely had to be the child of their commander, Immortal Darknorth; naturally, these Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals were extremely careful and respectful of Yu Wei.

Yu Wei smiled and nodded towards them, replying with a few pleasantries before turning and entering her residence to prepare some dishes for Ning.

A short while later, Ning returned.

"Senior apprentice-sister." Ning entered the room.

Yu Wei was carrying a platter of food outside as he entered. Smiling, she said, "I heard that you achieved a grand victory today. You even killed a True Immortal, a True Immortal Crimsonjoy?"

"You've heard already?" Ning sat down, surprised.

"Everyone in the camp is talking about it. How could I not know?" Yu Wei poured some Immortal wine for Ning.

Ning nodded and smiled. "Right. I was fairly lucky. Without planning on it, I ended up killing True Immortal Crimsonjoy in one blow. But alas...I was just a step too slow. If I made my breakthrough slightly earlier, our side probably would've lost even fewer forces." When Ning thought of his sixth brother, Celestial Immortal Rainbow, he couldn't help but feel a bit of misery. His Dao-heart, however, allowed him to quickly smooth over and settle down his emotions.

"You made a breakthrough?" Yu Wei said, surprised.

"Right." Ning nodded lightly, then said, "I've made a breakthrough in my soul heartforce technique."

His master, Subhuti, had instructed him long ago that he was not to casually inform others of his breakthrough to the Pure Yang True Immortal level. He was not to tell Yu Wei or Uncle White, who he held complete faith in, about it! If he told a single person, the Seamless Gate would have a chance to find out about it.

"You've finally made a breakthrough in your soul heartforce technique?" Yu Wei said joyfully, "Wonderful. A breakthrough in soul heartforce will allow you to control even more power from your Heaven Punisher, making it even mightier. Right now, in the war for the Grand Xia, there's not many on the side of the Seamless Gate who are a match for you."

"Haha. For now, at least, there's no one who can deal with me. True Immortal Whitepole, Gatemaster Azurefox, and the White-Faced Flood Dragon which is under the command of an Empyrean God all had to join forces together against me, and they still weren't a match." In front of Yu Wei, Ning did something he rarely did; he bragged a bit.

"I knew you'd be incredible." Yu Wei was very happy.

The more powerful Ji Ning was, the greater the chances of his survival would be.

Yu Wei and Ji Ning enjoyed this meal very much. Shortly after they finished...

"Eh?" Yu Wei suddenly felt a dizzy spell strike her.

"The Godking?" Yu Wei's heart clenched as she realized that it was the Godking forcibly summoning her.

The Godking had left his imprint upon her soul. There was no way

she could refuse his summons at all. When Azurefox wanted to reach Yu Wei, she had to wait for Yu Wei to fall asleep first...but the Godking could forcibly reach out to her, not needing to wait for her to go sleep.

Yu Wei didn't dare to hesitate at all. She immediately said, "Junior apprentice-brother, I'm full. I'm a bit tired; I'm going to take a nap."

"Go ahead and get some rest," Ning immediately said. She was currently pregnant; he didn't dare to negligent of her health.

Yu Wei moved into a nearby room, lay down on the bed, then shut her eyes.

.....

Within a vast world of darkness.

Yu Wei appeared out of nowhere, and as soon as she did she saw that massive royal throne hovering in the middle of the endless darkness, as well as the towering figure of the Godking seated upon the throne. She also saw Gatemaster Azurefox kneeling before the Godking. Yu Wei immediately knelt down as well. "I prostrate myself before you, Godking."

"Yu Wei," the Godking said, "The great battle the Grand Xia Dynasty just fought against our Seamless Gate...are you aware of it?"

Yu Wei was somewhat startled. She immediately nodded. "I do."

"The Seamless Gate suffered a major loss," the Godking said. "The Grand Xia won a great victory. Do you know why the Grand Xia won?"

Yu Wei hesitated a moment, then said, "Because of my junior apprentice-brother, Ji Ning."

She knew very well that the Godking had to be aware of all the details regarding the battle. There was no way any of it could be hidden from him.

"Right. Because of Ji Ning." The Godking slowly tapped his fingers against his armrest, a hint of doubt in his voice. "How could your Dao-companion, Ji Ning, have increased his power by that much? Did he become a Pure Yang True Immortal? Or is it because he's mastered the heartforce techniques which Old Man Yuan transmitted to him?"

"Your subordinate doesn't know," Yu Wei said respectfully.

"You don't know?" The Godking gazed downwards towards her.

Yu Wei's heart shook, but she forced herself to remain calm.

"I believe he must have become a Pure Yang True Immortal," the Godking said.

Yu Wei was surprised. The Godking already knew the answer?

"There is no way you can lie in my presence," the Godking said calmly. "I've summoned you and asked you simply because I wanted to test you...but in the future, if I ask you for any information regarding the Grand Xia and you dare to hide anything...then I will exile you into the Infinity Hells. When that happens...there will never be a chance for the child of yourself and Ji Ning to enter this world!"

Yu Wei's heart shook yet again. This was what she feared the most. The thing she wanted above all else was to survive until her child was born.

"Forgive me, Godking," Yu Wei said hurriedly.

The Godking just gave her a glance.

Whoosh. Yu Wei disappeared into thin air.

"Godking?" Azurefox raised her head to look at the Godking with a belly filled with questions.

"It seems that Ji Ning did not lie to Yu Wei," the Godking said slowly.

"Ji Ning has indeed come up with a soul heartforce technique. If he is allowed to grow unimpeded...I'm afraid that the Nuwa Alliance of the Three Realms shall soon gain yet another hard-to-deal-with Empyrean God or True Immortal."

Azurefox was even more puzzled.

"Ji Ning told Yu Wei that he made a breakthrough." The Godking gave his most devoted of servants an explanation. "A breakthrough in a soul heartforce technique! However, before this I was concerned that Ji Ning might have been lying. The best judge of whether or not he was lying would be Yu Wei, his Dao-companion; she knows him better than any others. If he lied, Yu Wei should be able to detect it. I could sense, however, that Yu Wei also believes that Ji Ning has indeed made a breakthrough in his soul heartforce technique."

Although Yu Wei hadn't said it, the Godking could completely see through all of Yu Wei's thoughts.

However...

What the Godking didn't realize was that Ning hadn't told anyone at all that he had broken through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal. Ning had indeed lied to Yu Wei. His heartforce was incredibly strong, and so he was able to reveal no flaws at all when lying. In addition, although Yu Wei had some vague guesses in her heart, she still had complete faith in Ning. Ning was the most important person in her life, and so harbored no doubts about his words at all.

After speaking with and querying Yu Wei, in the end the Godking decided that Ji Ning had to have truly made a breakthrough in heartforce.

Azurefox hurriedly said, "That's good. At least he hasn't become a Pure Yang True Immortal yet."

"Good?" The Godking gave Azurefox a sideways glance. "You still don't

understand what it means for him to have made a soul heartforce breakthrough. In the Three Realms, there are many who have become Empyrean Gods or True Immortals, but the number of individuals who have developed soul heartforce techniques can be counted on two hands."

Azurefox was shocked.

"Old Man Yuan transmitted his teachings to Ji Ning, but I didn't expect him to have mastered them in just three years." The fog around the Godking's black robes seemed to crackle with light. "Ji Ning has long ago mastered a thread of swordforce, and he has a deep level of insight into the Dao of the Sword. There is nothing impeding him from mastering it and becoming a Pure Yang True Immortal; this is just a matter of time."

"Mastering a soul heartforce technique, however, is extremely difficult."

"He's already accomplished the most difficult task before him," the Godking said. "He's completely mastered a soul heartforce technique, which means his control over his Heaven Punisher and the amount of power he can command has instantly increased tenfold or twentyfold. Once he also becomes a Pure Yang True Immortal...the power of his Immortal army will explosively increase yet again."

"When that happens...he will have become incredibly hard to deal with. The Nuwa Alliance will have gained yet another lethal weapon."

The Godking was hesitant, not sure what to do next.

The battle between the two alliances was a slow, drawn-out battle where each side was fighting for every bit of land!

Each time, they would whittle away a little bit of their enemy's strength, but over the course of many battles, the accumulated amount of damage they had done would allow them to gain a great advantage! At present, the True Gods and Daofathers on each side

were all unwilling to intervene, because they knew that once one side intervened, the casualties would instantly skyrocket. This storm, however, was unavoidable; they had to fight at some point. At the start, however, they were going to conserve their strength as much as they could.

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals struggled for karmic luck.

But towards the end...when one side realized that they no longer had any chances at all to improve their karmic luck...they would most likely launch their most frenzied, berserk of assaults!

That would be when the final battle would occur.

Right now, however, both sides felt that they had opportunities to improve their karmic standings, to improve their karmic luck. If they were able to do so, then Heaven and Earth would be on their side.

And in this battle for karmic luck...some extremely special Empyrean Gods or True Immortals could be tremendously effective in this regard, such as Lu Dongbin and his Eight Immortals of the High Caves, or the terrifying divine archers. If Ji Ning was to master a soul heartforce technique and become a Pure Yang True Immortal, the army he commanded would be able to become an important variable that had a major influence on the entire war.

.....

Time flowed on.

The Godking's left hand slowly but continuously tapped against the armrest of his throne. Tap. Tap. Tap. Azurefox felt as though each tap was a tap striking upon her very heart.

Suddenly, the Godking's left arm came to a halt.

Azurefox lifted up her head. She could feel as though the entire world of darkness had just solidified.

A flash of lightning seemed to have appeared within the Godking's eyes. He said coldly, "Sooner or later, we will need to fight a decisive final battle against Crimsonbright. Then...let this final battle's location be the world of the Grand Xia. Make your preparations. I will summon the power of the Fifth World and send them to descend upon the Grand Xia. We'll prepare for a Realmwar and get rid of Ji Ning at the same time."

"Realmwar?" Azurefox was shocked.

Sometimes, the war against a major world would explode beyond one's expectations. The major powers on both sides would constantly reinforce their subordinates, resulting in a massive war which the majority of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals within that realm would participate in, along with a truly countless number of the realm's Celestial Immortals and True Immortals. This sort of war... was known as a Realmwar.

"Hurry up and prepare," the Godking ordered.

"Yes," Azurefox said respectfully. She immediately departed from the world of darkness.

Chapter 27 – Ambush

The Heaven Realm.

Ever since that ancient, primordial war had resulted in the shattering of the world and the creation of the Three Realms, the Heaven Realm had been the largest remnant-world that had been left behind. The aura of the Heaven Realm was very similar to that of the aura of the ancient world. In this vast realm, the Celestial Court merely held partial sway, commanding the eastern reaches. Mount Ling of the Buddhists was located in the west, and the many Buddhas were all located there, resulting in having a much higher status than the Court.

When the Celestial Emperor saw the Buddhas, he would have to behave with the utmost of respect.

The Buddhas were all figures comparable to True Gods and Daofathers, after all; at most, they would be superficially courteous to the Celestial Emperor, the nominal leader of the Three Realms.

The Heaven Realm was also filled with sacred grounds of the Daoist Path.

The Daoist Path, the Buddhist Sangha...they were the true powers of the Heaven Realm. Second only to them were the various major powers. Of course, there were many other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals with their own turfs and territories in this realm as well, where their rule held sway. They paid no attention to the Celestial Emperor at all.

.....

The Heaven Realm. Mount Tonglian.

“Great King! Great King!” A Void-level mouse-type Diremonster flew forward, calling out loudly. He soon reached a great palace, inside of which were six Diremonsters Gods with difference appearances.

These six Diremonster Gods were drinking from cauldrons of wine and eating large chunks of meat with utter relish.

"What is it?" A massively, burly, golden-eyed Diremonster God with long whiskers barked out.

The Void-level Diremonster hurriedly knelt down with a thud. "Great King, True Immortal Songcloud has sent an emissary inviting the six of you to gather at his Cloudsong Mountain half a year from now."

"True Immortal Songcloud?"

The six Diremonster Gods immediately shook off the effects of the wine, becoming completely sober. They each exchanged a glance.

"Understood. True Immortal Songcloud always wastes time dithering about. Us six brothers, our time is incredibly precious, and we're not in a mood to go out wandering. Tell the emissary to f*ck off." A tall, skinny Diremonster God whose face was covered with azure scales barked out at the mouse Diremonster.

"Yes, yes, yes!" The Void-level Diremonster immediately retreated.

"Ugh. I'm feeling a bit woozy from all the wine. I'm going to take a nap." The golden-eyed Diremonster immediately lay down and began to snore.

"I'm going to nap as well." Yet another lay down.

"If you won't drink, I will."

Some of the six Diremonster Gods went to sleep, while others continued to drink.

But even though they continued to drink...as Empyrean Gods, they were naturally able to easily create lesser clones of themselves. Their clones were all hiding within their respective Immortal estates, and they immediately went to sleep.

.....

The Heaven Realm. Cloudmist Creek.

Deep within the flows of Cloudmist Creek, there was an underwater palace. There were all sorts of monsters serving within this underwater palace, including shrimp soldiers and crab commanders. The masters of this underwater estate were the famous Nine Cloudmist Fairies. The Nine Cloudmist Fairies... although they were described as 'Fairies', in reality they were Diremonsters who had trained to reach the Empyrean God or True Immortal level. Because they shared deep affection for each other, advancing and retreating in lockstep, they became famously tough to deal with in the Three Realms.

When all nine of them joined forces...unless a True God or a Daofather intervened, there were very few in the Three Realms who could do anything to them.

"Sisters, enough play. It's time to train. The storm has come, and we can't waste any time or relax." The eldest sister of the nine, Fairy Skycloud, spoke out.

"Our eldest sister speaks the truth." The other beautiful Diremonsters all assented to her words.

They all returned to their still rooms, ostensibly to train...but in reality, they entered the realm of dreams.

.....

Within the vast world of darkness.

The massive Godking sat upon his towering, thirty thousand meter throne, his black robes cast around him like a dark mist. He sat there, quietly.

One group of Immortals and Fiendgods after another began to appear before him.

"Why has the Godking summoned us?"

"Eh? This many people?"

"The six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian have arrived. The Nine Cloudmist Fairies have arrived as well? Hey, aren't those the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater? So they are on our side as well? Last time, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater killed two Bodhisattva's of the Buddhist Sangha."

Many Immortals and Fiendgods began to congregate, all at the Empyrean God or True Immortal level.

There were some weaker ones who were 'ordinary' Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, but the likes of the six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian, the Nine Cloudmist Fairies, and the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater stood at the very top. Although the Godking had a hundred Seamless Gates, supreme powers like those three reported directly to the Godking himself! The other Seamless Gates were unable to give orders to them.

"We prostrate ourselves before you, Godking."

"We prostrate ourselves before you, Godking."

Although they all felt shock in their hearts upon arriving, they all knelt down respectfully.

As time passed, more and more Immortals and Fiendgods arrived, with True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox included amongst them. When the sixty-eighth member arrived, the Godking, seated upon his high throne, finally spoke out.

"The Crimsonbright Realm is under the control of Daofather Crimsonbright." The Godking's voice rang out, filling every inch of this vast, dark world as well as the hearts of his subordinates. "If the Seamless Gate is to gain in karmic luck, then we have to take control of many major worlds. Our previous battles against the Crimsonbright Realm were merely small skirmishes, and Daofather

Crimsonbright has been holding his own power in reserve as well. Both of our sides have been preparing for a true Realmwar to begin."

All of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals seated below were startled. They were immediately able to guess at what the Godking had summoned them for.

"If we do not completely destroy them, we won't be able to stabilize our control over their major worlds. We must gain victory in the Realmwar; we must defeat them completely." The Godking's voice turned icy. "If we can defeat them in the Realmwar, then the worlds of the Crimsonbright Realm will become powerless to resist us, allowing us to win them over with ease."

"If we do not defeat them...then they will be able to push us out from even the major worlds we've taken over for now."

"The Realmwar against the Crimsonbright Realm...shall be located on the world of the Grand Xia!"

The Godking made his announcement.

The Godking had an extremely high status amongst the high-level major powers of the Seamless Gate. In addition...the still-slumbering presence had only taken on a single apprentice; the Godking! This made the Godking's status quite transcendental; so long as he didn't commit a major error, the Godking would usually remain in control over the full forces of the Seamless Gates.

"The current master of the Grand Xia is a member of the Primordial Imperial Clan, Xiamang Sun. This Xia Emperor's power is quite formidable," the Godking said. "Azurefox commanded her forces to clash against the Xia Emperor numerous times, but at present she is losing!"

"Losing?"

All of the Immortals and Fiendgods looked towards Azurefox. They all knew that Azurefox was completely devoted to the Godking. Amongst

the individuals present, some were fanatically loyal while some had been seduced by the great power the Seamless Gate had to offer, which was why they had joined. Even those, however, were afforded tremendous respect by the Seamless Gate, due to their own power.

"The reason why she is losing is because a new variable has emerged on the side of the Grand Xia's Xia Emperor; a variable named Ji Ning," the Godking said. "The Heaven Punisher he commands is incredibly powerful. As for exactly how powerful... spend some time chatting with Azurefox, and you'll all understand."

"Understood," they all assented.

"I've summoned you here in such a cautious way because...I want you to launch a sneak attack." The Godking's eyes flashed with lightning.

"Sneak attack?"

Everyone present began to ponder.

"Right now, the Grand Xia is most likely celebrating their great success. I trust they are planning to completely wipe out Azurefox's forces," the Godking said. "After you all assemble at the world of the Grand Xia, stay in hiding; just accompany Azurefox and the others as they fight. When the time comes...all of you are to appear simultaneously. Wipe out all of the forces of the Xia Emperor. Leave no survivors!"

"Yes!" The Immortals and Fiendgods all grew eager.

An ambush?

An unexpected surprise. Given their power, they were indeed overwhelmingly more powerful and would indeed be capable of utterly crushing and slaughtering the Xia Emperor's forces.

"The most important aspect to this ambush...is to be careful. No matter what, do not let this information leak out," the Godking said solemnly. "Some of the major powers within the Nuwa Alliance are

able to watch the entire Three Realms. That Subhuti in particular... he is Ji Ning's master, and is most likely keeping an eye on the war for the Grand Xia. He's also capable of using his [Dream of the Three Realms]...one he finds out, our ambush will fail."

"So Ji Ning is Subhuti's disciple." All of the Immortals and Fiendgods were secretly surprised, and they grew even more wary of him.

This was because Daofather Subhuti was legendary for his ability to teach and train disciples.

"You have to be careful. For now, gather and remain in the Void beyond the Three Realms," the Godking instructed. "That way, Subhuti will not be able to discover you. Then, go into hiding and have the two Jueming Immortals use their Protocosmic spirit-treasure to tear a hole to the Void, bringing you straight into Azurefox's Seamless City. That way, even if Subhuti discovers the two of you, he'll only think that you are there to provide reinforcements."

Everyone below the throne nodded. Indeed. Right now, Azurefox's Seamless Gate was losing. If she asked the Godking for reinforcements, and the Godking hadn't decided to initiate a Realmwar...sending out the two Jueming Immortals as reinforcements was indeed his original plan. Thus, this sort of arrangement made sense and didn't have any visible flaws.

"Remember. The most important component of this ambush is for it to remain a secret," the Godking reminded them once again.

"Understood," they all acknowledged.

All of them were quite eager. They would first wipe out all of the Xia Emperor's forces, including the one named Ji Ning. Then, they would engage in a battle against the army of Daofather Crimsonbright. If they were able to wipe out the Xia Emperor's forces, the Realmwar would be easier for them to win.

.....

The Xia Emperor's forces naturally were completely oblivious that the Godking was summoning his forces within the dreamworld.

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The Xia Emperor was filled with complete confidence right now. He stood in midair as he said in a loud voice, "Everyone, we are extremely close to victory. We need to seize this chance to kill more of the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Seamless Gate. We are going to expel them from the Grand Xia and make it so that they never again dare to invade. If they choose to fight to the death...then we will wipe them all out!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

The countless gathered Immortals and Fiendgods all roared loudly. Their morale was at an all-time high...and the Xia Emperor was filled with confidence as well.

The entirety of Whitepole Commandery was trapped within his formation. Not even Greater Teleportation would allow anyone to enter this place. The only possibility was if someone forcibly tore a hole through space...but if that was to happen, he would definitely notice! Once he saw any signs that the Seamless Gate was being reinforced, he would ask Daofather Crimsonbright for help. Daofather Crimsonbright had promised the Xia Emperor that if the Xia Emperor was able to force the enemy to call for reinforcements, he would definitely help out.

"Let's head to the Seamless City!" The Xia Emperor ordered.

Instantly, many grand formations began to take shape within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

One massive, towering Heaven Punisher after another began to take

form, as well as the even more massive Pangu War-Formations. Although some Fiendgods had perished, most were still alive. The two remaining Pangu War-Formations had lent the destroyed one some of their forces, and so they were still able to form three of the Pangu War-Formations! That massively powerful Raindragon swam about in the air above them as well...and the Empyrean God golems were all activated.

The most powerful aura of them all, however...belonged to the Heaven Punisher that wielded two massive swords in its hands!

"KILL!" Military morale was at a peak as the mighty, awe-inspiring army suddenly vanished into thin air, having teleported outside the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Chapter 28 – Daofather Crimsonbright’s Reinforcements

A short while later.

Ji Ning and the others returned to the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

“Back already? Didn’t you just go out to fight a short while ago?” They were back in the military camp, and Yu Wei was looking towards Ning in surprise. The Immortals of the Darknorth Army had been sent back to their respective residences. As they returned, they were all chattering about how ‘the Seamless Gate was so cowardly that it was unwilling to even fight,’ and how ‘it seems as though the Seamless Gate recognizes that it is about to lose’.

Ning walked into his room, sitting down by a desk. He poured himself a glass of wine, then said with a smile, “The Seamless Gate is feeling nervous now. We were shouting for them to come fight for a long time, but they refused to come out.”

“If they are going to just hide there...then what should we do?” Yu Wei was worried.

“If they aren’t willing to fight, that’s a good thing.” Ning laughed. “Ideally, they’d never come out to fight again. So long as they don’t fight, the Grand Xia will remain the Xia Emperor’s, and the karmic luck of the Grand Xia will remain on our side.”

Yu Wei nodded gently.

“The Seamless Gate has two paths ahead of it right now,” Ning said. “The first path sees them abandoning their designs on the Grand Xia. The second path is for them to summon even more of their forces to take it by force. I hope they take the first path.”

Although Ning was filled with a desire to do battle, his wife was pregnant; he wanted to calmly and peacefully accompany her and watch his child be born.

"The Seamless Gate probably won't just admit defeat like that," Yu Wei said softly, thinking back to the world of darkness and the Godking within it.

Ning nodded. "Right. I've only killed True Immortal Crimsonjoy; the Seamless Gate hasn't really been hurt yet. For them to admit defeat right away? The chances of that are very low."

Ning reached out to gently stroke Yu Wei's protruding belly. He couldn't help but smile.

No matter what storms and tempests awaited him...there were some things he absolutely had to protect.

.....

Within the Void beyond the Three Realms, on a shattered, destroyed planet that was covered in countless scars.

The scars had been left behind by a battle between two major powers. Atop this shattered planet, twenty nine Empyrean Gods and True Immortals had gathered, with more on the way.

"In this Realmwar, we will be following the three Diremonster Gods."

"I've heard long ago of their power. This time, we'll have a chance to see it for ourselves."

The various figures began to chat with some of the more powerful Immortals and Fiendgods, paying the most attention to the Three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater'. These three Diremonster gods were shockingly powerful, and were considered by their fellow Empyrean Gods and True Immortals as being nearly invincible. Each of the three were more powerful than the Xia Emperor or True Immortal Whitepole!

Their decision to join the Seamless Gate had utterly enraged the Nuwa Alliance upon the Nuwa Alliance finding out. Alas, there was nothing the Nuwa Alliance could do; both sides were doing their

absolute best to recruit the powerful Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Three Realms to their respective sides.

In the past, the Three Realms had been at peace. Many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were free and unaffiliated with any organizations. Now, with the storm having come, they had to choose a side. Only the most supreme of powers, such as Old Man Yuan's faction, were still able to watch and wait.

"Everyone's here."

"All of our fellow Daoists have arrived." Two Immortals who looked very similar to each other laughed. Both had large faces and were fairly chubby. One was dressed in white robes, while the other was dressed in gray robes that were loose enough to reveal his bare chest. These two were the exceptionally famous 'Twin Jueming Immortals'.

"Fellow Daoists, please enter this gourd first." The white-robed Immortal took out a gourd, opening its stopper.

This was merely an Immortal-ranked magic treasure; the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals present were more than capable of forcibly breaking their way out of it if needed.

"Alright."

"Let's go inside."

"Let's go."

Instantly, one streak of light after another flew towards the mouth of the gourd. Afterwards, the white-robed Immortal plugged the gourd again, then slung it over his shoulders. Smiling, he said, "Elder brother, let's go to Whitepole Commandery of the Grand Xia."

"Right." The gray-robed figure nodded, then immediately used a spatial technique to teleport straight to the world of the Grand Xia.

Next, the gray-robed figure took out a black Protocosmic spirit-treasure that looked like a ruler. He sliced it through the air, carving out a spatial corridor. Through the spatial corridor, one could see that the other side was connected to a location where a massive, towering black citadel lay hanging in the air. This was the Seamless City.

"Let's go." The two Jueming Immortals immediately flew into the corridor.

.....

Within Whitepole Commandery. The hovering Seamless City. A spatial tear appeared in the air above the levitating city, and two chubby Immortals came out from the spatial tear, flying towards the Seamless City below.

"Our two fellow Daoists have arrived."

"Fellow Daoist Jue and fellow Daoist Ming."

Gatemaster Azurefox and True Immortal Whitepole all immediately went forward to greet the two, the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals right behind them. The likes of the Hallmaster, Empyrean God Beastleave, and Empyrean God Venomsong all called out in a very familiar manner. "So it's the two Jueming Immortals. Now that you two have arrived, fellow Daoists, our side's chances of gaining victory have increased greatly."

"With your spells by our side, we'll no longer have to fear the Grand Xia."

Azurefox and Whitepole exchanged a few glances with the Twin Jueming Immortals. They didn't even send any mental messages. All of them were being extremely cautious, for fear that the Nuwa Alliance would find out. If the Nuwa Alliance found out, they would lose their chance to ambush their foes.

.....

The walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

The black-robed Xia Emperor was upon the walls, gazing at the vast wilderness outside and the distant Seamless City as he reflected quietly.

Suddenly...

Space trembled. The Xia Emperor's grand formation had taken complete control over the surrounding million kilometers of space. Upon the Twin Jueming Immortals forcibly tearing a path to the Seamless City, the Xia Emperor immediately noticed.

"Eh?" The Xia Emperor frowned as he looked towards the spatial tear. Upon seeing the two chubby Immortals fly out from the spatial rift, the Xia Emperor immediately understood. "The Twin Jueming Immortals? It's actually the two of them? The Seamless Gate really views me quite highly. Although these two Immortals cannot compare to Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher, their spells are quite formidable. With their spells supporting an army, the Seamless Gate's total combat power will have risen by an entire level. If we continue to fight against them...it's hard to say who would win!"

.....

The seat of enlightenment of Daofather Crimsonbright.

The Daofather was seated upon his throne, with dozens of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals standing before him. They were all staring at the battle-scene that was playing out within the round mirror of light in midair. This was the Realmwar that was occurring within the Winesun Realm.

"Realmwars truly are vicious. This is the third time I've seen a Realmwar, but I still shudder at what I am seeing."

"More than twelve of our Empyrean Gods and True Immortals have died within the Winesun Realm. The Seamless Gate has only lost seven!"

"The golems of the Seamless Gate truly are unequaled within the Three Realms. If they didn't have so many terrifying golems, the Seamless Gate would've lost ago. Now, however...it's Daofather Winesun's side which is at a disadvantage."

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all watching worriedly.

Although this war was going on within the Winesun Realm, Daofather Winesun and Daofather Crimsonbright were in the same alliance, after all. They all hoped that Daofather Winesun's forces would gain victory; in fact, some of them itched to personally charge into the fray as well. However, they understood that it was up to the Daofathers to decide when they would join a battle.

The Daofathers would at most send a few Empyrean Gods and True Immortals as reinforcements. If Daofather Crimsonbright sent all their forces...then once a Realmwar exploded within the Crimsonbright Realm, what were they to do?

The flames of war had spread across the entire Three Realms, after all; the Winesun Realm was merely one part of it.

"Miserable."

"What a miserable sight."

All of those who were watching the Realmwar take place felt their hearts shudder. Almost none of them had ever experienced such a catastrophic, miserable war.

"Master," the Xia Emperor's clone said respectfully.

"Mm?" Daofather Crimsonbright looked towards the Xia Emperor.

"Your disciple just discovered that the Seamless Gate's branch in the Grand Xia has just received reinforcements. The Twin Jueming Immortals are now with them," the Xia Emperor said.

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals who had been watching the

Winesun Realm's Realmwar all immediately turned their heads. No matter how important that war was, they still cared the most about the events within the Crimsonbright Realm.

"The Twin Jueming Immortals?" Daofather Crimsonbright nodded gently. He pondered a moment, glancing downwards. "Who amongst you is willing to go aid the Grand Xia and your fellow disciple, Xiamang, in defeating the Seamless Gate?"

"I am willing!"

Everyone replied in chorus. In the face of this great tribulation, no one could shirk back at all.

Daofather Crimsonbright smiled as he looked carefully at his host of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. Some had their own major worlds to protect, while others had only sent their clones to this place. Soon, Daofather Crimsonbright's gaze turned towards two solitary figures. "Snowdance, Evergreen, the two of you shall head to the Grand Xia and assist your senior apprentice-brother Xiamang."

"Yes."

Sword Immortal Evergreen and Fairy Snowdance naturally wouldn't dare to disobey, and so they immediately assented to the order.

Both of them were solitary figures who were not attached to any worlds. They could be sent to any place where they were needed.

Suddenly...

Space itself began to grow blurry, especially the space around Daofather Crimsonbright, which became opaque and misty. There was no way at all one could see past the blurred space. This caused the Xia Emperor and the others to feel completely amazed; why would their master, Daofather Crimsonbright, suddenly unleash this sort of a formation?

.....

Daofather Crimsonbright stared at his surroundings, puzzled. The space around him had already become completely twisted, and within the twisted, distorted space appeared a bearded old man dressed in Daoist robes. It was Subhuti.

"Subhuti," Daofather Crimsonbright said in surprise, hurriedly rising to his feet. "Why've you come to my place? The last time you sought me out, it was for the sake of your disciple, Ji Ning. This time, you've come to speak to me again...is there something you need me to do? However, your disciple is doing well right now. The Heaven Punisher he commands has extraordinary power; he doesn't need my help."

"I'm not here to ask for your help; I'm here to help you," Subhuti said.

"Help me?" Daofather Crimsonbright was puzzled.

Subhuti calmly sat down. Daofather Crimsonbright walked towards him, then waved his hand. A wooden table immediately appeared before them, covered with precious Immortal wines. He personally poured a cup of wine for Subhuti. Subhuti and Crimsonbright were on extremely good terms with each other; they had both been born from the primordial chaos, after all, and both were True Gods of Primordial Chaos. They had supported each other in life-and-death battles for many years, and in truth the relationship between them was no less than the relationship between Subhuti and Threelives had been.

"What is this about, exactly?" Daofather Crimsonbright asked.

"Just now, you were about to send your disciples to the Grand Xia, yes? You were sending them to the deaths." Subhuti went straight to the heart of the matter: "Not just your two disciples; I imagine that few to none of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals under Xiamang will survive. But of course, my disciple will definitely survive."

With the seven Empyrean Gods protecting Ning...although the seven wouldn't be able to overcome the ambushing army, they'd still be

able to ensure that he could escape.

Daofather Crimsonbright was stunned.

“Don’t just sit there like a fool. The Realmwar for your Crimsonbright Realm is about to begin. All of your disciples and students have to fight for their lives, now.” Subhuti let out a sigh, then raised his head and downed a cup of wine.

“Realmwar?!” Daofather Crimsonbright shot to his feet, knocking aside his winecup, splashing wine all over the table.

Chapter 29 – Openly And Honorably

“Subhuti...” Daofather Crimsonbright stared at Subhuti. He couldn’t resist from saying, “Is this really true?”

“Do you think I’d lie to you about something like this?” Subhuti sat there, calmly drinking his wine. “You shouldn’t be so shocked. We’ve already had multiple Realmwars against the Seamless Gate within the Three Realms. It isn’t odd for one to have begun within your Crimsonbright realm.”

Daofather Crimsonbright nodded slowly. Only now did he sit down, then sigh, “Right. Sooner or later, a Realmwar was going to come to my Crimsonbright Realm. But now that it really is happening...I still feel pained. My disciples...my students...they’ve been by my side for countless ages. They are all like my own children. But now, I’m going to watch them fight within a Realmwar...watch them die, one by one...”

Subhuti nodded slowly.

He, too, had many disciples; he knew exactly how Crimsonbright felt.

They were all born as True Gods of Primordial Chaos, and as such had no actual children. Their cherished disciples were as important to them as actual children were to ordinary mortals. This was amplified by the fact that they would often spend countless ages training and accompanying their disciples, resulting in extremely deep relationships.

Perhaps, as major powers, they would have the mental fortitude to watch one of their disciples die without interfering...but when nearly all of their disciples were facing possible death, of course they would truly feel heartache and panic. How many of them were truly willing to suddenly become alone and bereft of all their loved ones?

“Subhuti.” Daofather Crimsonbright nodded solemnly. “Thank you for your warning. If it wasn’t for you...Xiamang’s side would’ve been

doomed."

Subhuti just chuckled, lifting his cup of wine and continuing to drink in a leisurely fashion.

"Right. Since they plan to ambush Xiamang's forces," Crimsonbright suddenly said, "Should I do the same? I can openly send some limited reinforcements, while secretly prepare a vicious little trap for them. Shall we give them a taste of their own medicine?"

"Impossible." Subhuti shook his head. "You know exactly how formidable the Seamless Gate's intelligence network is. It is far too difficult for you to mobilize your forces without the Seamless Gate finding out! Even if we really were so lucky as to avoid discovery...do you have any idea as to how many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals the Seamless Gate has actually sent?"

"How many?" Crimsonbright immediately asked.

"Sixty-six," Subhuti said calmly. "They include the six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian, and the Nine Cloudmist Fairies..."

Crimsonbright's face instantly became ugly to behold.

"They also number amongst the ranks the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, who recently caused the Buddhists to suffer catastrophic losses," Subhuti said.

"What? They came as well?" The look on Crimsonbright's face completely changed. "But...but...this is merely a war against my Crimsonbright Realm. For the Seamless Gate to summon the six from Mount Tonglian and the nine from the Cloudmist Creek is one thing...but they even summoned the three from Mount Dragoneater?"

Unless a Daofather acted against them, it could be said that those three mighty Diremonster Gods were nigh-invincible.

"How should I know?" Subhuti shook his head. "No matter what, the

three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater have indeed gone to the Grand Xia."

What Subhuti didn't realize...

Was that the reason why the Godking had sent the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater was because he wanted to neatly and cleanly get rid of the troublesome Ji Ning. As the Godking saw it, Ji Ning had already mastered a soul heartforce technique; once he became a Pure Yang True Immortal, his Heaven Punisher would probably be a match for those three Diremonster Gods, all by itself.

In truth, the Godking had guessed wrongly; the number of figures within the Three Realms who had truly mastered a soul heartforce technique could be counted on two hands. No matter how monstrously talented Ji Ning was, and despite him having been taught the [Heart Sutra] of Old Man Yuan, he had only been able to just barely gain a basic level of skill in the technique. He couldn't even be considered as being an expert in it, much less have mastered it!

However, this decision to get rid of Ji Ning was indeed the right decision for the Seamless Gate. This was because, although Ning had only just reached a basic level of skill, as time went on his skills in the soul heartforce technique would only grow more and more profound, and he would prove to be a greater and greater threat.

"I've said everything I came to say," Subhuti said. "Crimsonbright, deal with this information as you see fit." After speaking, Subhuti disappeared into thin air, and the distorted field of space once more went back to normal.

Daofather Crimsonbright waved his hand, collecting the table of wine in front of him, then glanced downwards.

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals seated below him could now see him again. They were all very puzzled, but none of them

dared to ask.

"You've all seen the Winesun Realm's Realmwar," Daofather Crimsonbright said, pointing towards the round mirror of light.

Everyone present was puzzled.

What of it? Were they about to be sent as reinforcements?

"Your peaceful, relaxed days have come to an end. Our Crimsonbright Realm's Realmwar has begun!" Daofather Crimsonbright continued calmly, "The major powers of the Seamless Gate have already sent a large group of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to descend upon the Grand Xia. They include the six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian, but we can discuss those details later. All you need to know for now is that their reinforcements include more than just the Twin Jueming Immortals; rather, their reinforcements include a total of sixty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, including the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater!"

Everyone's faces changed.

Sixty-six?

Including the forces that the Seamless Gate already had within the Grand Xia, such as True Immortal Whitepole and Azurefox...didn't that mean a total of nearly eighty would take part in the war? Eighty Empyrean Gods and True Immortals...what a terrifying force that was!

Could it be...

"This is now a Realmwar!" Daofather Crimsonbright looked downwards. "No one can escape it. Go and make your preparations for your various worlds. Protect them all securely. Any remaining forces are to be pooled together and sent to the Grand Xia."

"Yes!" The Immortals and Fiendgods all assented solemnly.

The Xia Emperor's body was covered in cold sweat. The Twin Jueming Immortals were actually...actually just a façade for the sixty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals? The Xia Emperor felt terrified just thinking about what would've happened.

"Those who do not need to go summon their armies or arrange for various logistics should head out immediately." Daofather Crimsonbright began to give orders. "Head straight to Xiamang's 'Eight Dragons Cloudcity' in an open, aboveboard manner. Put an end to the Seamless Gate's fantasies of ambushing us!"

"Yes!"

.....

Daofather Crimsonbright did have more than a hundred Empyrean Gods and True Immortals under his command, but battles were currently occurring on various other major worlds as well; he had to leave some of them behind to protect his other major worlds. If he left none behind, the Seamless Gate would be able to effortlessly take them over. Thus, the number of individuals which Daofather Crimsonbright could employ was actually limited.

Of course, there were also lone wanderers such as Sword Immortal Evergreen, Fairy Snowdance, True Immortal Riverstar, and Empyrean God Fufang. The figures from the fairly stable major worlds could also be sent to the Grand Xia.

That very day, twenty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were sent to the Grand Xia as part of the first wave.

The Grand Xia. Whitepole Commandery. Outside the Seamless City, the black chains continued to rustle as they anchored the city into the void. Inside was a hubbub of noise.

To prevent the Xia Emperor from growing suspicious, True Immortal Whitepole and the others didn't launch an immediate attack. Instead, they had done what they would normally do; they first held a

welcoming banquet for the Twin Jueming Immortals. The plan was to call out the Xia Emperor's forces after they finished the banquet! If they were too impatient, they wouldn't achieve their desired goals. The more critical things were, the steadier one had to be in handling them!

"Come, drink!" True Immortal Whitepole laughed loudly. "Now that the Twin Jueming Immortals have arrived, we'll be able to suppress the Xia Emperor's side in terms of supportive spells. The power of our Empyrean God golems and Bloodcloud golems will improve greatly, giving us a chance to win!"

"Right. Spells and enchantments can have a huge impact on golems. We have far more golems than them; we were in desperate need of the Twin Jueming Immortals."

"We can definitely win this battle."

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were laughing and jesting about while drinking. Then, suddenly...

"Eh?"

All of their faces changed. They could clearly sense the enormous ripples that were being generated through a spatial rift being opened. The spatial rift in question was very close to them, after all.

"Let's go take a look." True Immortal Whitepole remained quite calm. Winecup still in hand, he chortled as he rose to his feet. He took a single step and appeared outside of the banquet hall.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! One after another, the experts all left the banquet hall and flew into the air above the Seamless City. They stared towards the distance.

And in the distance...

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity had appeared. Eight divine dragons were roving around it, giving it an aura that was even mightier than

that of the Seamless City. A spatial rift had already appeared above it, and one Empyrean God and True Immortal after another began to emerge from the rift and fly towards the Eight Dragons Cloudcity below. These Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were chatting and jesting with each other, appearing to be quite relaxed.

"Empyrean Gods and True Immortals?"

"Those are the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals under Daofather Crimsonbright."

"So many..."

"How many have already entered the Eight Dragons Cloudcity? From the looks of it, there must be at least twenty of them. As to how many will arrive...hard to say." They all had completely different looks on their faces as well.

The two chubby Jueming Immortals, who had been beaming merrily in a very amiable way, now had flat looks on their faces.

Flames of rage blazed in Azurefox's eyes as well.

As the field marshal...True Immortal Whitepole, who had managed to remain calm up till now, could no longer remain calm.

Crack! The winecup in his hand shattered, breaking apart into tiny dust-like pieces. The wine splashed out, but before the wine even drew close to him, it froze into pieces of ice and fell to the ground.

"Damn! DAMN!!!" True Immortal Whitepole couldn't refrain from cursing.

As the field marshal, the fact that he had been forced to request reinforcements had already deeply disappointed the Godking.

This ambush was extremely important. In an head-on fight in a Realmwar, killing ten Empyrean Gods and True Immortals was incredibly difficult and required an enormous cost to be paid. Their

ambush, however, would've allowed them to easily and effortlessly wipe out the Xia Emperor's forces. But now...they could all tell that their plot had failed."

"How could it have failed?!" True Immortal Whitepole gritted his teeth. Almost. Almost! He had almost wiped out the Xia Emperor and all his forces.

.....

"What's going on?"

Within the military camps of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, quite a few Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals had emerged from their respective residences to stare up into the sky.

Ji Ning and Yu Wei actually flew out of the entire camp. They stood there in midair, watching.

Celestial Immortals Unity, Dustfloat, Whacko, Rainsoar, and Allbeasts were standing in midair and watching as well.

"This is...?"

An enormous rift had appeared in the skies, and one figure after another was flying out from it, each possessing auras of incredible power.

They had to be Empyrean Gods or True Immortals.

"So many of them?" Ning was somewhat stunned.

"Come to the main palace right away." The Xia Emperor's voice rang out within the minds of Ji Ning, Celestial Immortal Unity, and the others.

"I need to go to the main palace," Ning said to Yu Wei.

"Go." Yu Wei nodded. Ning was a commander; he naturally had to participate in the discussions involving this momentous event.

Moments later...

The main palace. Xiamang was seated atop his throne in the principal position, while more than thirty Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, along with Ning and the rest of the five, were seated before him.

"We actually just gained twenty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. What in the world has happened, for us to suddenly gain so many? If we are to launch an ambush, why didn't they come secretly? The entire region of a million kilometers around us is under the Xia Emperor's control; he could've had them come in secret, then launch a sneak attack against the Seamless Gate." Ning's heart was filled with questions.

The Xia Emperor, seated up high on his throne, explained: "I imagine that none of you know what is going on. The reason why Master has sent so many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to reinforce us...is because the Seamless Gate is about to launch a Realmwar against our Crimsonbright Realm, and the location shall be our Grand Xia."

"Realmwar?" Ning and the others were all stunned.

"True Immortal Whitepole hasn't merely invited the Twin Jueming Immortals; he's actually gained a total of sixty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals," the Xia Emperor said solemnly. He paused for a moment, giving Ning and the others some time to digest this stunning information, then continued. "However, our side has discovered their plot, and so Master has first sent a vanguard of twenty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, with the main army arriving later."

"My fellow disciples already know about all of you," the Xia Emperor said with a laugh. "However, I imagine that most of you don't recognize them."

Ning and the others all nodded.

"Let me make the introductions. This is my senior apprentice-brother, Hiddenvoid. Senior apprentice-brother Hiddenvoid was the first to follow Master, and the Hiddenvoid Formation he created is quite incredible," the Xia Emperor said. "This is my junior apprentice-sister Snowdance..."

However, the gazes of these twenty-plus Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were focused on and shifted between Sword Immortal Evergreen and Ji Ning.

Chapter 30 – The Daofathers Descend

The Xia Emperor made the introductions, one by one. Ji Ning had heard of some of these Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, although he had never met them before. There were also some he had never heard of. Not everyone was as famous as Lu Dongbin, after all...but one's power couldn't be judged by one's fame. Some especially reclusive Empyrean Gods and True Immortals might have power comparable to Lu Dongbin's.

"This is junior apprentice-brother Evergreen," the black-robed Xia Emperor said with a laugh as he glanced towards Ji Ning.

Sword Immortal Evergreen?

Ning was startled. He gave Sword Immortal Evergreen a careful look. This was a young man who had a strange-looking face and an outstanding aura of talent. He couldn't help but muse to himself, "So he is Sword Immortal Evergreen? The Xia Emperor once asked him to accept me as his disciple, and he agreed, transferring a message talisman to me. However...I instead went to Mount Innerheart and didn't take him on as my teacher." Ning felt somewhat apologetic towards this Sword Immortal Evergreen; after all, he had gone off to Mount Innerheart without saying a thing. Although Sword Immortal Evergreen's instructions were that if Ning let ten days pass without shattering the talisman, he would take it as Ning having refused... Ning had slipped out in a rather stealthy fashion, afraid that the Xia Emperor would stop him. To be fair, that wasn't the most straightforward and honest of actions.

"In the past, Ji Ning nearly became apprenticed to junior apprentice-brother Evergreen," the Xia Emperor said with a laugh. "Come to think of it, it can be said that there are karmic ties between the two of you."

"Respectful greetings, senior Evergreen," Ning immediately said. "Back then, I ignored your good intentions..."

"Back then, I didn't actually want to take you on as my disciple." Sword Immortal Evergreen spoke quite calmly. "Because Master instructed it, I agreed to take you on as my disciple. I've never been good at teaching disciples; if you had followed me, you probably wouldn't be as accomplished as you are now. It is good that you have become apprenticed to a Daofather."

These words contained arrogance within them; it was as though Evergreen was implying that he had never taken notice of Ning, and that Ning should be thankful that he was lucky enough to become apprenticed to a Daofather. His words were as sharp as a sword, and they caused Ning to feel startled.

"This Sword Evergreen Immortal...he really cares nothing about friendship at all," Fairy Rainsoar mused to herself.

"If I were Ji Ning...just based on his attitude alone, I wouldn't even bother to speak to this man," Celestial Immortal Unity mused silently to himself as well.

The Xia Emperor laughed. "Ji Ning, junior apprentice-brother Evergreen is always by himself in seclusion, and is a Sword Immortal; his bones are steeped in pride. Although his words are often unpleasan to the ear, he doesn't have any ill intentions."

"Right. My words are indeed unpleasant to hear; I say whatever I wish to say." Sword Immortal Evergreen looked towards Ning as well.

"Senior, you are a straightforward man." Ning smiled, not saying anything else.

There were some people whom you simply couldn't converse peaceably with.

He had previously felt a hint of embarrassment, but this simple interaction made Ning feel certain that it was best for him to keep his distance.

.....

The Xia Emperor held a special celebratory banquet for the newcomers. Although Sword Immortal Evergreen was cold and arrogant, there were many other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals present. With so many people there, things naturally became quite lively, and so this Immortal banquet was a joyful one.

While the Xia Emperor was relaxing in a carefree manner, True Immortal Whitepole of the Seamless Gate was having an absolutely miserable time.

Within the vast world of darkness.

True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox, the two fellow disciples, were both on their knees. The towering, black-robed figure seated upon that distant, massive throne caused them to feel dread in their hearts.

"Godking, please pardon us for our crimes," True Immortal Whitepole said nervously.

Although he was the Godking's disciple, he still usually referred to him as 'Godking' rather than 'Master'.

The Godking had a heart that was as cold as ice. When he gave instructions to his subordinates, he usually only cared about the results. Their 'sneak attack' plan had died in the cradle; they hadn't even had the chance to initiate it. Although this really had nothing to do with True Immortal Whitepole, in the Godking's heart...the value and trust he placed in Whitepole had dropped dramatically.

"Daofather Ink Bamboo will descend upon the Grand Xia for this Realmwar. He will take control over everything," the Godking said.

"A Daofather is descending?" True Immortal Whitepole and Gatemaster Azurefox were both stunned.

Daofather Ink Bamboo was one of the oldest members of the Seamless Gate, who had been alive when it had first been founded. He had experienced the war that resulted in the destruction of the

Primordial Era, and had managed to safely survive it. However, since the Godking's status was very special due to the fact that he was the sole disciple of that slumbering presence, Daofather Ink Bamboo was willing to assist the Godking.

"Whitepole, you have deeply disappointed me. There is no way I can possibly let you manage the Realmwar now," the Godking said. "Thus, Daofather Ink Bamboo shall personally manage it. But of course, he won't personally intervene. Once the Daofathers begin to personally intervene, it's possible that the Endwar will suddenly happen, earlier than we intend."

If Daofather Ink Bamboo dared to attack, then the Nuwa Alliance's major powers would strike out as well. The other Daofathers of the Seamless Gate would then help Ink Bamboo...and so the battle would quickly escalate, resulting in the Endwar.

Neither side wished to launch the Endwar in advance, because the results of such a war would be catastrophic. Even the victor would suffer terrible losses.

"Your subordinate understands," both Whitepole and Azurefox said respectfully.

"I'll send squads of Immortal armies to reinforce you. Since we cannot ambush them, then let us build up our strength. Once we are fully prepared, we'll make our move," the Godking instructed.

"Yes." Whitepole and Azurefox kowtowed.

Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were very important in Realmwars, but having vast armies of Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals was also very important.

In sufficient numbers, they could kill even True Immortals and Empyrean Gods!

The reason why they had 'only' sent out sixty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals earlier was for the sake of ambushing their foes;

thus, they hadn't sent out their armies of Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals. The armies would cause too much of a stir; there was no way to hide such a massive mobilization.

.....

Time passed, one day after the other.

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity and the Seamless City both remained there in midair, facing each other. Neither side called out the other for battle. A strange peace had arrived...but this sort of peace caused every Immortal and Fiendgod on both sides to feel as though a terrible storm was pressing towards them. What was coming next... was the eruption of a terrifying Realmwar!

"Imperial Majesty." Ji Ning was meeting the Xia Emperor by himself.

"Ji Ning?" The Xia Emperor was seated atop his throne, flipping through a few books. Smiling, he said, "Sit."

Ning sat down. He couldn't help but ask, "Imperial Majesty, the countless Immortals of our six Heaven Punishers are feeling uneasy and nervous. When, exactly, shall we begin our fight against the Seamless Gate? Or shall we have a long-lasting truce? It's best if we can give a clear answer, so as to calm everyone's minds."

Fear of the unknown was one of the greatest of fears.

"Oh. This is my fault." The Xia Emperor understood. "My clone has been by Master's side at his seat of enlightenment this entire time, helping to make the arrangements for the various armies. I forgot about the many Immortals within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity."

Ning looked at the Xia Emperor.

"This Realmwar...the twenty-six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals that arrived earlier are all people who don't have things tying them down, which was why they were in the first wave. There are others who will be coming as well. Most importantly of all, there are many

Immortals coming; the number of summoned Celestial Immortals is in excess of three hundred thousand," the Xia Emperor said.

"Three hundred thousand Celestial Immortals?" Ning called out in shock.

Good heavens!

"There's nothing to be surprised about. The Grand Xia alone has ten thousand Celestial Immortals," the Xia Emperor said. "Master is in control over dozens of major worlds and countless minor worlds. With so many major worlds embroiled in war, many new Celestial Immortals have been birthed through their experiences. The Crimsonbright world which Master himself created has a particularly high number of Celestial Immortals. The total number of Celestial Immortals under Master's command has to be over a million."

"A million Celestial Immortals?" Ning couldn't breathe.

"However...that's in the past. Even our Grand Xia has seen three thousand Celestial Immortals turn traitor, thanks to the blandishments of the Seamless Gate. I imagine that in the entire Crimsonbright Realm, at least a hundred thousand Celestial Immortals have been induced to join the Seamless Gate. The total number of Celestial Immortals currently under Master's command is now probably less than a million," the Xia Emperor said.

Ning agreed.

Before the Seamless Gate appeared, the likes of the Youngflame clan and True Immortal Whitepole were, on the surface at least, subordinate to Daofather Crimsonbright.

Once the storm arrived...many lines were drawn. Daofather Crimsonbright's forces had indeed been weakened.

"Because many other major worlds need to be stabilized as well, it was quite hard for three hundred thousand Celestial Immortals to be gathered here," the Xia Emperor said. "If we squeezed our

resources a bit more, we might be able to summon another two hundred thousand Celestial Immortals...but the amount of pressure that would place on the other major worlds of the Crimsonbright Realm is too great."

"Understood." Ning nodded.

"More than three hundred thousand Celestial Immortals, and tens of millions of Loose Immortals." The Xia Emperor continued, "In addition, my elder brother, Daofather Raindragon, has sent some reinforcements as well. Based on what our Daofathers have learned, the Seamless Gate has sent Daofather Ink Bamboo to personally command their forces in this Realmwar...and so Master will accompany his grand army of three hundred thousand Celestial Immortals. He will descend upon the Grand Xia and take personal command of this war."

Ning's heart clenched.

How terrifying.

So this was how a war between Immortals was?

Both sides would have Daofather commanders and dozens of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, hundreds of thousands of Celestial Immortals, and tens of millions of Loose Immortals.

"This is a Realmwar!" The Xia Emperor stared at Ning. "Both sides are frantically summoning as many soldiers and generals as they can in an attempt to build up as much power as possible before launching the war. Once the war stars...I truly can't even imagine how many Immortals are going to die. During this preparatory time period, you need to focus on your training. Ideally, you would become a Pure Yang True Immortal. That way, the Immortals under your command will pose a greater threat to the Seamless Gate."

Ning nodded slowly.

He did indeed have to start training harder.

Although he had already become a Pure Yang True Immortal, he hadn't even reached the expert level in his soul heartforce technique. Every day, he had some new insights into the soul heartforce technique; given enough time, his power would continue to increase until the day came for him to reach the level of mastery in it. Upon reaching that level...Ning couldn't even imagine how powerful his Heaven Punisher would be. One thing was certain; by then, the amount of natural energy absorbed by a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals would definitely be insufficient. He would need more Immortals.

"Calm your mind and enjoy this final period of peace before the great war erupts anew," the Xia Emperor said, looking at Ning. "Once both sides have finished their preparations...I'm not even sure if I will survive that war. If half of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals survive, that would be an excellent result."

"Right." Ning nodded.

.....

Ning spent the following days with his wife while diligently training in his soul heartforce technique. The full attention of both his true body and his Primaltwin were focused on the soul heartforce technique, because it was this technique that would allow him to reach a high level of power as fast as possible.

All the Immortals within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity knew that these were the final days of peace they would see. The Realmwar was coming. The mood within the city became noticeably heavier.

New Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were constantly descending upon the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, until finally...one day...

BOOM!

The entire world of the Grand Xia seemed to shudder.

Ning had been seated in the lotus position with his eyes closed,

focusing on the soul heartforce technique. He immediately charged out and flew into the skies, and right away he saw that in the air above the black Seamless City, an utterly enormous spatial corridor had appeared. A tall, skinny man whose unbound hair seemed to gleam with infinite darkness stepped out from the spatial corridor, entering the Grand Xia.

He looked rather ordinary, but he radiated a halo of infinite darkness. Behind him appeared an enormous, swaying bamboo stalk that was thirty thousand meters tall, causing Ning and the others to feel a sense of oppression.

Ning, a Pure Yang True Immortal, still felt a sense of oppression. One could only imagine the nameless dread which Celestial Immortal Unity and the others felt!

"Daofather!" Ning immediately recognized what this individual had to be.

Chapter 31 – Military Strength

“Daofather Ink Bamboo?”

Upon seeing the titanic, swaying bamboo stalk, Ji Ning instantly guessed at who this was. There were only so many major powers within the Three Realms. If the man hadn’t shown off his trademark, Ning wouldn’t have been able to tell, but since he did, it became an easy guess.

From what he had heard...Daofather Ink Bamboo was famous for being ‘unkillable’. His true body was that of a stalk of inky-green bamboo that was filled with boundless vitality. By relying on his special life techniques, he had managed to survive even the great tribulation that had destroyed the Primordial Era.

“That must be Daofather Ink Bamboo. Just looking at him from afar makes my heart quiver. That halo of darkness around him...I can sense that if I touch it, I’ll definitely die.”

“This is the first time I’ve seen a Daofather.”

“A Daofather who controls a Heavenly Dao...I truly wonder how powerful Daofathers really are...”

The entire Eight Dragons Cloudcity was filled with discussions.

Loose Immortals made up the vast majority of the population within the city, after all; when Daofather Crimsonbright had summoned his million Celestial Immortals, the Celestial Immortals of the Crimsonbright Realm had seen him in person, broadening their horizons. The countless Loose Immortals, however...they truly didn’t have a chance to see Daofathers in person. This time, however...they saw Daofather Ink Bamboo.

“I heard that Daofather Crimsonbright will descend as well, for the sake of this Realmwar.”

"I wonder what Daofather Crimsonbright looks like."

Everyone was filled with eagerness.

.....

Three months after Daofather Ink Bamboo descended upon the Grand Xia, Daofather Crimsonbright descended as well.

On that day, the Xia Emperor had summoned Ning and the others to respectfully await his arrival. Even the solitary, arrogant Sword Immortal Evergreen was behaving with complete decorum.

BOOM!

Suddenly, the entire world shook once more.

And then...an unbelievably massive chasm appeared within the skies above them, many tens of thousands of meters long. An azure-haired old man strode out from within it. Taking a single step, he entered the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"Master."

"Daofather."

The Xia Emperor was the first to call out respectfully. After he did so, Ning and the others all bowed respectfully.

A single glance; that was all it took for Ning to form a deep impression of Daofather Crimsonbright in his mind. Daofather Crimsonbright was a very old, very solemn and silent individual. Looking at him was like looking at an ancient tree that had existed for countless ages.

Daofather Crimsonbright swept the host with his eyes, his gaze falling upon Ning. "Subhuti's always had a strange disposition. He's clearly taught an entire host of students, but he doesn't command them to fight with him, instead letting them remain scattered across

the Three Realms. This young apprentice of his, Ji Ning, clearly has tremendous potential, and Subhuti clearly cares about him deeply. And yet...Ji Ning is now following me instead of him." Sometimes, Daofather Crimsonbright truly didn't understand this old friend of his.

Subhuti had a very strange disposition. Or perhaps it could be said that he was excessively detached!

He clearly had a large group of extremely powerful disciples. If he gave the order, Subhuti's many disciples would flock to his banner, immediately resulting in the creation of a force that was as powerful as the Four Ancestors of the River Source. If Subhuti truly put all of his resources into building up such a force, it would probably become even more powerful than the forces of the Four Ancestors of the River Source.

And yet...Subhuti had no intentions of commanding his disciples at all.

Daofather Crimsonbright didn't understand. None of the major powers of the Three Realms understood. The feeling which Subhuti gave many of the major powers of the Three Realms was that of mysteriousness, and so he was acclaimed as the most mysterious Daofather of the Three Realms.

Rumble...

After Daofather Crimsonbright descended unto the Grand Xia, the massive chasm in the skies above remained open. A throng of Immortals began to flood in through the massive chasm in an awe-inspiring stream. The flood of Immortals seemed endless! They flew out from the chasm, then flew straight towards the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

One great Immortal army after another...

The number of armies was far, far greater than the number which

the Grand Xia itself had!

"Wo...wow..."

"This is really..."

"This is too...heavens..."

Even Ning felt breathless. As for the Celestial Immortal and Loose Immortal soldiers of the Grand Xia who were on duty and unable to leave their camps, they watched this sight breathlessly.

There was no limit to them!

It was like a flood! A flood of Immortals and Fiendgods!

"Compared to this...the so-called celestial soldiers and celestial generals of the Celestial Court aren't worth a damn. I heard that the Celestial Court has several armies with hundreds of thousands of soldiers, the weakest of whom are merely at the Primal Daoist level. Celestial Immortals are high-ranking members of the Celestial Court, while the Celestial Emperor himself would frantically try to befriend any Empyrean Gods and True Immortals who appear. If this Immortal army before us went to the Celestial Court, they would wipe it out in the blink of an eye."

"Right. I can see millions of Immortals."

"Millions? There has to be at least ten million."

"Those Fiendgods as well; there is definitely more than ten million of them."

The soldiers of the Darknorth army camp and the other army camps of the Grand Xia had their horizons broadened today. The Grand Xia, all by itself, was comparable to the Celestial Court in power. The Realmwar before them...Daofather Crimsonbright had summoned all of his usable forces for it. This was the might one of the true hegemons of the Three Realms could summon, might which vastly

surpassed that of the Celestial Court.

However, this sort of massive scale mobilizations only occurred during truly great tribulations.

.....

Within the dark Seamless City.

The tall, skinny Daofather Ink Bamboo was standing atop the city walls. Behind him was a host of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, and all of them stared towards the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"They have quite a few Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals," Daofather Ink Bamboo said with a laugh.

"Daofather Crimsonbright is just putting on a show of force for us; the number of Immortal soldiers we have on our side isn't lower than his." The three Diremonster Gods who stood closest to Daofather Ink Bamboo were the three who had come from Mount Dragoneater.

Mount Dragoneater had three mighty Diremonster Gods.

The boss was the Great Sage Who Swallows the Mountains.

The second was the Great Sage Who Swallows the Seas.

The third was the Great Sage Who Swallows the Skies.

Each of them had resoundingly shocking titles. When they had first given themselves these nicknames during the Primordial Era, it had been viewed by many as something of a joke. These three had styled themselves in a manner imitating that of the Seven Great Sages, who had been powerful Empyrean Gods during the Primordial Era. By now, the seven were even more unfathomably powerful than they had been. The three from Mount Dragoneater had grown increasingly powerful as well, and by now there was no one who dared to mock them for overestimating their abilities.

The three of them were invincible against anyone weaker than a Daofather.

"Second brother, we do indeed have as many Immortals and Fiendgods as they do, but many have yet to arrive." The lion-headed Diremonster God Skyswallow rubbed his mouth as he spoke.

"The military strength of the Seamless Gate is still a bit weaker than the Nuwa Alliance's, making it harder for us to mobilize," Daofather Ink Bamboo said calmly. "We have to rely on our advantage in intelligence reports in order to effectively use our forces."

Their intelligence reports were very formidable, allowing them to use just thirty percent of their military power to achieve hundred percent effectiveness.

Fortunately, the major powers of the Nuwa Alliance had formidable tools at their disposal as well which also allowed them to discover many things. Otherwise, they would've been defeated in this war for karmic luck long ago.

"Although we are weaker, we're still capable of guarding this city," Azurefox said with a smile.

"Right." Daofather Ink Bamboo nodded. "Even if they attack, all we have to do is defend for now. After all of our forces arrive, we'll give them a real fight. Victory over a single major world usually isn't that important, but this is a Realmwar. All of you should understand that you have only one path open to you; the path of victory."

Everyone, including the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, nodded solemnly.

Once they lost, it would be hard for them to flee and escape. Many, many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the defeated side would perish.

Comparatively speaking, the victors would suffer lighter casualties.

This was because the true slaughter would occur once one side was completely routed. That was when the most Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would perish!

Don't want to be massacred?

Then win!

.....

The awe-inspiring Immortal armies and Fiendgod armies had all gathered at the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Fortunately, the city spanned ten thousand kilometers, and could also transform to become even greater in size; naturally, everyone was able to fit inside.

"These tens of millions Fiendgods are enough to form into seventy-eight Pangu War-Formations." Daofather Crimsonbright was seated high up on his throne, a smile on his face as he gave his orders.

"They shall be commanded by Empyrean God Fufang, Empyrean God Kindwater, Empyrean God Willowtemple..."

"These twenty-six Empyrean Gods shall each command three Fiendgod armies."

"Yes."

Instantly, the twenty-six Empyrean Gods all assented respectfully.

Not one of them disobeyed the Daofather's order.

The twenty-six Empyrean Gods all immediately used cloning techniques. Empyrean Gods could easily create multiple clones of themselves. In a real battle, however, the fewer clones one created, the more powerful one would be. When these twenty-six each split into three clones, they sent each clone to command one of their three Fiendgod armies. Although their power was weakened due to the three-way split, resulting in weaker Fiendgod armies, they were still much more powerful than any Void-level Fiendgod commander.

In addition, with one Empyrean God commanding three Fiendgod army squads, each of the three would be able to better reinforce and support the other two.

"The forces that Daofather Raindragon sent...according to what Daofather Raindragon said, you eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals shall continue to command those eighteen Raindragon armies," Daofather Crimsonbright said.

Instantly, eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals stood up to salute.

These were the reinforcements which Daofather Raindragon had sent. In truth, Daofather Raindragon had only sent reinforcements due to the relationship he had with the Xia Emperor, as well as the fact that the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater had been pulled into this war.

"The remaining Immortal armies shall be divided up to form 326 Heaven Punishers," Daofather Crimsonbright said with a laugh. "The Heaven Punisher Formation is even better suited for battle than the Crimsonbright Formation I previously created. My 326 generals...I am entrusting you with these Immortals."

"Yes."

Instantly, twelve Empyrean Gods/True Immortals and 314 Celestial Immortals all rose to their feet, with Ning amongst the ranks of the Celestial Immortals.

"The Empyrean God golems and the other tools shall be left in the hands of Xiamang," Daofather Crimsonbright said. "Alright...the Seamless Gate is completely focusing on defense for now. I imagine they will need some time to gather all of their forces. I expect that the great war will begin within a year. Previous commanders of the Crimsonbright Formation need to quickly become familiarized with the Heaven Punisher Formation. Now, all of you can leave."

"Yes." Everyone rose to their feet, then departed.

Even the Xia Emperor departed. As soon as he left the main palace, he mentally sent to Ning, "Ji Ning, Master gave me a special order; he told me to place an extra two thousand Celestial Immortals and two hundred thousand Loose Immortals under your command."

"Eh?" Ning was puzzled.

"This way, you'll have a total of three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals under your command, allowing you to form into an even more powerful Heaven Punisher," the Xia Emperor said. "You are perfectly suited for your role as the commander of your Heaven Punisher; naturally, you need to be given more Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals."

The Perfect Heaven Punisher Formation involved a commander, 9000 Celestial Immortals, and 810,000 Loose Immortals.

"Fine." Ning smiled. If the Xia Emperor hadn't raised it, Ning was planning to do so himself. This was because Ning had made some additional improvements in his soul heartforce technique during this temporary ceasefire; he was now able to control 100% of the power of a Heaven Punisher formed from merely a thousand Celestial Immortals and a hundred thousand Loose Immortals.

Chapter 32 – War Erupts

“I’ll send the Immortals to your army camp right away. You need to quickly accustomize yourself to commanding three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals. The power of your Heaven Punisher will increase yet again; perhaps, at a critical moment in the war, I’ll have to rely on you to save my life,” the Xia Emperor laughed. “However, you have to be careful. The most outstanding tree within a forest is often the first to be felled. You’ll most likely suffer attacks from many members of the Seamless Gate.”

“Understood.” Ji Ning nodded.

“Ideally, you should keep some power hidden in reserve. If you suddenly unleash it at a critical moment in a battle, you can have a major impact on the course of the war,” the Xia Emperor reminded.

“Right.” Ning smiled and nodded.

He hadn’t even told his master, Subhuti, that he had become a Pure Yang True Immortal. By now, he had already created the twelfth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], a stance which encompassed the entire Dao of the Sword. However, he had never before displayed this technique, nor had he spoken to anyone of his improvements in soul heartforce.

.....

Time flowed onwards.

Nine months passed in the blink of an eye.

Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position within a private room inside his residence.

The Pure Yang Jindan within his body was swollen with golden light, and its luster had become an even denser color.

A series of ripples were currently emanating from his Jindan, ripples caused by the merging of his soul into it. The invisible, untouchable power known as 'heartforce' was constantly sending commands to his soul. He was meditating nonstop on the soul heartforce technique. When meditating, he would often meet with many puzzling problems. Ning would either ponder them alone, or compare them to the information he had in the [Heart Sutra] in the hopes that he might be inspired.

There naturally were differences between Ning's technique and Old Man Yuan's technique, but they sprang from the same foundation and had certain similarities. This was of assistance to Ning in terms of speeding up his meditations.

"Everyone, the Seamless Gate is prepared for battle." The Xia Emperor's voice rang out by the ears of the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and commanders.

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity was the Protocosmic spirit-treasure of the Xia Emperor; he was able to send out these messages with ease.

"Prepared for battle?" Startled, Ning immediately came to a halt.

Whoosh.

He pushed open the door to his private room, then walked out. Yu Wei gave Ning a puzzled glance. "Why have you ended your training so quickly?"

"The war is about to start again," Ning said.

"Right now?" Yu Wei's face completely changed.

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"I had thought that I'd be able to give birth to our child first." Yu Wei stroked her belly, which was very large by now. One could tell just by looking at her that childbirth was imminent.

She had a very gentle look in her eyes as she stroked her belly, a look that was filled with motherly love. She said softly, "I can feel our baby kicking about in my belly. It's very likely that I'll give birth in just another month or two."

"I, too, was hoping that the war would only start after our child was born. Unfortunately...that's not up to me," Ning sighed.

"You have to take care of yourself. Don't push yourself too hard. We have an absolutely massive Immortal army, while you are just one man." Yu Wei looked at Ning.

"I know." Ning nodded.

Forget about him; even if the seven Empyrean Gods all came out, they would most likely only be able to have a small, localized impact on the Realmwar. The three hundred Heaven Punishers alone were comparable to three hundred Empyrean Gods in power!

"Don't worry about me. I have to go now." Ning immediately turned and walked towards the outside.

Yu Wei had a look of worry in her eyes as she watched Ning leave.

A Realmwar...

No matter how much faith she had in Ning, she still felt fear in her heart.

"You have to survive," Yu Wei murmured softly to herself as Ning left.

"DARKNORTH ARMY, ASSEMBLE!" Ning's voice rang out, shaking the entire Darknorth army camp.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Instantly, the voices of hundreds of thousands of Immortals could be heard as they called out their assent and started to join into formation.

.....

Of all the formations that were in the airspace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, the utterly massive Pangu War-Formations were the most eye-catching. Although there were only seventy-eight Fiendgod armies, their formations took up more than half of the available space. Next to them was a total of 324 Heaven Punishers, each one thirty thousand meters tall and clad in nothing more than fur loincloths.

Around them flew the sinuous Raindragons.

There were also many Empyrean God golems as well as some Empyrean Gods and True Immortals.

“The Seamless Gate is no longer focusing exclusively on defense.” Ning stood there in midair, staring at the scene outside. The distant battlefield now held ancient, towering Godbeasts, Fiendgods, and many powerful golems. There were also many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals; they looked small and unremarkable, but they absolutely could not be underestimated. The army outside had already summoned so much natural energy from Heaven and Earth that the distant skies had turned dim, with dark clouds filling the skies.

“The Daofather has arrived.”

“Daofather.”

Ning immediately noticed as Daofather Crimsonbright appeared in the distance. Instantly, the massive armies that were hovering in the air above the Eight Dragons Cloudcity became completely silent.

Daofather Crimsonbright swept his gaze past each and every one of them. “This,” he said calmly, his voice carrying a terrifying desire for battle, “Is the war between my entire Crimsonbright Realm and the Seamless Gate. There is no way to avoid, no way to escape this battle. Our only choice is to face it head-on! If you want to survive, then there is only one path forward...to completely wipe out the Seamless Gate!”

"Either we perish, or the Seamless Gate perishes!" Daofather Crimsonbright now had a terrifying look in his eyes, a look of murder.

Even the elderly-looking Daofather Crimsonbright had a savage side to him, at a time like this!

Only those who had experienced that ancient war of the Primordial Era would truly understand that there really was no way out of a great tribulation like this. Even figures as powerful as the Four Ancestors of the River Source would eventually have to choose an alliance, once the final Endwar came. Anyone who tried to avoid the war would be assailed and killed by both camps. Neither side would allow any True Gods or Daofathers to stand aloof and potentially mop up the survivors!

Two sides!

Only one side could survive!

"Go forth and conquer!" Daofather Crimsonbright finally gave the order. "Kill them all!"

"Kill them all!"

"Kill them all!"

"KILL THEM ALL!"

Countless angry roars shook the skies, causing the ground itself to tremble, as though the world was about to burst apart.

In the past, these Immortals may have been as graceful as the wind and as pure as the clouds. Now, however, they had all become as savage and berserk as demons. In the past, they may have enjoyed limitless lifespans, allowing them to roam about in a leisurely fashion, wandering the Three Realms and making new friends. In the face of this storm, however...the murderous impulses that lurked deep within the bones of the Immortals and Fiendgods would be completely unleashed. This was a great war of two opposing paths,

of two opposing Daos; for me to live, you had to die. This was more than just a war; it was a struggle for survival!

Rumble...

The massive armies shot through the skies, flying outside.

As for the Seamless Gate's forces, they stood in perfect formation, waiting and watching coldly as the Crimsonbright Realm's forces came forth.

The awesome presence of these armies was enough to cause the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals to quiver in terror. In the end, however, they were nothing more than tiny chess pieces, just parts of a greater formation. They had entrusted their commanders with their fates, with Ning holding the lives and destinies of three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals in his hands. Ning's personal prowess, in turn, made it so that each of his soldiers were extremely respectful towards him.

.....

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
BOOM!!!!

One Heaven Punisher after another descended, landing on the ground and causing it to tremble violently. The Raindragons flew about around them, while the utterly massive Fiendgod armies emanated the mightiest auras of all.

The two sides faced off against each other, both of their auras equally terrifying.

"Once Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals are gathered in such frightening numbers, even someone like myself would have to give way before them." Daofather Ink Bamboo stood atop the walls of the Seamless City, a smile on his face. He sighed, "Those Empyrean Gods and True Immortals in particular...the most powerful of them are almost comparable to Daofathers in might."

The most powerful Empyrean God in the entire history of the Three Realms was Houyi!

Perhaps there were some other monstrously talented Empyrean Gods who were able to give Daofathers a fight and live to tell the tale, but when Houyi was an Empyrean God...he had actually KILLED a Daofather! Of course, Houyi eventually broke through to become a True God himself, at which point his reputation and his power grew to an even more incredible level. He was publicly acknowledged as the number one divine archer of the Three Realms, and he came up with the systemized heartforce archery technique known as [Houyi's Archery].

This was the one and only heartforce technique that was completely systemized, allowing anyone to train in it. The techniques which Ning had come up with, for example, were only suitable for himself to train in; there was no way he could teach it to someone else, no matter how hard he tried. Old Man Yuan, in turn, had simply provided Ning with the sum of his own personal experiences, allowing Ning to benefit from them in coming up with his own ideas.

Alas, this great divinity Houyi, who had caused the entire Three Realms to quiver in terror during the Primordial Era, had completely vanished.

"Crimsonbright?" Daofather Ink Bamboo stared into the distance.

Daofather Crimsonbright stood there atop the distant walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, staring towards the Seamless City.

These two Daofathers stared at each other from afar. As their gazes met, it was as though a streak of black light had suddenly clashed against a streak of azure light, causing space itself to tremble.

"Crimsonbright, long time no see!" Daofather Ink Bamboo said.

"Indeed, long time no see. Only...it would be better if you died and I never saw you again," Daofather Crimsonbright said coldly.

Everyone on their side, be it Subhuti or Crimsonbright, felt nothing more than the utmost of enmity towards the Seamless Gate.

This sort of enmity had existed from the earliest of days.

This was why Subhuti, Crimsonbright, and the others were so utterly enraged that Old Man Yuan was just watching without choosing a side. As Subhuti and the others saw it, he shouldn't have even hesitated to stand with the Nuwa Alliance.

"Me? Die? Haha...I, Ink Bamboo, specialize in staying alive. During those bygone years, when I followed his Majesty, we nearly wiped you out." Daofather Ink Bamboo sighed. "Alas...in the end, Nuwa actually broke through to Pangu's level. Otherwise, you would've been doomed. Now, the storm has risen once again...and this time, you won't be able to escape it. You True Gods, you Daofathers...all of you will die. None of you will survive!"

"Quite arrogant of you. Back then, the Primordial World was shattered, Mother Nuwa made her breakthrough, the Lord of All Things was slain, and even your 'king' was forced to merge himself into the Heavenly Daos and transform himself into part of them to survive. Even if he's awakened...so what? He's still merely a part of the Heavenly Daos, restricted and bound by them at all times, unable to be truly free." Daofather Crimsonbright laughed coldly, "He's no longer the king he once was."

"His Majesty remains his Majesty." Daofather Ink Bamboo smirked. "Now that the storm has arisen, I trust that you can subconsciously sense the way in which the river of destiny is flowing...and that you understand that there is no way to avoid this storm. His Majesty will move in concert with the Dao of the Heavens in aiding our Seamless Gate in wiping you all out."

"Wiping us out is the will of the Dao of the Heavens?" Daofather Crimsonbright laughed coldly. "What a joke. If the Dao of the Heavens wished for us to perish, then why engage in a battle for karmic luck?"

Daofather Ink Bamboo was startled. He then shook his head, no longer saying anything.

In his heart, Daofather Crimsonbright felt regret...

The Seamless Gate was still able to maintain some degree of contact with their ancient king, and so they knew many secrets. Daofather Crimsonbright wished to suss out some of their secrets, but alas, the Seamless Gate was very cautious, only revealing information which the Nuwa Alliance already knew.

One thing was for certain; the Nuwa Alliance was going to fight for every scrap of karmic luck they could! Afterwards, they would wipe out the Seamless Gate in the Endwar.

The ancient, slumbering king of the Seamless Gate was very terrifying, but in the end he was now nothing more than a part of the Dao of the Heavens. All things within the Three Realms were ruled by the Dao of the Heavens; one couldn't simply do whatever one wished! This was the reason why the Nuwa Alliance felt absolutely certain that it would win. If that old bastard could do as he pleased, the Nuwa Alliance would've lost long ago; Mother Nuwa herself had left the Three Realms, after all, having gone exploring the infinite primordial chaos around it. With her gone, no one was strong enough to face that presence head-on.

"Fight for more karmic luck."

"Win this war for karmic luck, no matter what the cost. The more karmic luck we have, the more the Dao of the Heavens will support us. That old bastard is being restricted by the Dao of the Heavens, and so the amount of aid he can provide the Seamless Gate will be lessened as well."

Daofather Crimsonbright swept the vast enemy army with his gaze. These countless Immortals and Fiendgods were all here for the sake of karmic luck. Only by winning this war could the countless geniuses of the world, such as Ji Ning, be able to survive this great

storm...because they had chosen to stand with the Nuwa Alliance.

If they lost their karmic luck, and if even the Dao of the Heavens stood on the side of the Seamless Gate...it was likely that they would lose the final Endwar, at which point Ji Ning and the countless Immortals and Fiendgods would all be wiped out and exterminated.

"Attack!" Daofather Crimsonbright's voice rang out by the ears of Ji Ning and every single commander. Ning and the others all felt their blood begin to surge and boil. Their eyes instantly turned red with battle-lust.

"Attack!"

Instantly, the awe-inspiring armies began to charge forward. More than three hundred Heaven Punishers bound forward on bare feet, charging towards their foes.

As for the great armies of the Seamless Gate, they too let out an earth-shaking howl: "Kill!" They too charged forward.

Fiendgods...Terrorbeasts...awe-inspiringly large armies...the world was filled with them. It was like two giant floods of power had just crashed into each other.

Chapter 33 – Death Is But A Statistic

The bare feet of Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher pounded against the ground as it charged forward. Ning lead the charge, the other Heaven Punishers by his side. More than three hundred of them were charging forward against the forces of the Seamless Gate, including many Empyrean God golems, White-Faced Flood Dragons, Zhuyan Apes, and other types of Terrorbeasts and Fiendgods.

BOOM!

The two armies collided against each other.

"Kill!"

Despite charging forward, Ning's Heaven Punisher continued to move at the speed the other Heaven Punishers were moving at. Although there were twelve Empyrean God or True Immortal commanders amongst the 326 Heaven Punishers, neither they nor Ning moved beyond the pack. Once the two armies collided, however, Ning and the twelve all exploded with full power, their speed and their strength increasing dramatically!

"That one is Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher."

"Careful."

The forces of the Seamless Gate were naturally able to recognize Ning, but there was no way for them to avoid him on this vast field of battle; the only choice was to take him on! A Zhuyan Ape, completely covered with white fur and with red feet, bellowed and charged forward with a similarly ferocious aura of power, pushing past the other Terrorbeasts and becoming the first to bar Ning's path.

"If he dares to block me, he must have at least a bit of power behind him. This is most likely a Zhuyan Formation commanded by an Empyrean God or a True Immortal. This is the first clash in the Realmwar, with both sides striking each other head-on; such a

chaotic battle is the perfect chance to render military merits!" A savage light flashed through Ning's eyes, and the top-grade Pure Yang 'Splitter' in his hands instantly transformed into an utterly massive shield.

The headless Heaven Punisher held the shield in its two mighty arms and continued to smash forward!

The burly Zhuyan Ape was shocked. "How sly of Ji Ning! I am a Pure Yang True Immortal with many marvelous spells; in skill and technique, I'm naturally vastly superior to him. Although I've heard that Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher is very powerful, if he was to use sword-arts, I trust I could tie him down for at least a short period of time. If I can do that, the other members of the Seamless Gate will have arrived to assist me. But he instead chooses to ram forward with a shield; my only option is to take him head-on."

"Still...even if we are competing in raw strength, I'm in command of 1800 Celestial Immortals and many Loose Immortals. I don't believe I can't beat him!"

Zhuyan Apes were incomparably savage and strong as well.

"ROAAAR!" The Zhuyan picked up a shield and also charged straight forward towards Ning.

The two great figures, each holding a giant shield, rammed straight towards each other, their footsteps causing the earth to tremble.

BOOM!!! The two shields collided.

"What?! How can he be so strong? He's even stronger than Azurefox and Whitefox claimed him to be!" The Zhuyan Ape felt a terrifying, irresistible surge of energy push straight towards him. He was knocked flying away, completely unable to control himself.

The spectators, however, only saw that as soon as Ning and the Zhuyan Ape collided, the Zhuyan was immediately knocked backwards, causing the other Zhuyan Apes behind it to hurriedly

clear a path to avoid being hit.

During the year-long ceasefire, Ning had improved greatly in his soul heartforce technique. In this exchange, however, Ning still concealed his true power and true level of improvement. The simple fact that he now had three times as many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals resulted in his Heaven Punisher instantly and automatically becoming much more powerful.

"This isn't the time for me to unleash my full power yet. I need to find a turning point, a turning point capable of influencing the entire war." Massive shield in hands, Ning immediately threw himself towards a second Zhuyan Ape after having knocked the first one flying.

"Get over here, quick!"

"Stop him!"

The second Zhuyan Ape was panicking. In truth, a Pure Yang True Immortal was already flying towards them, preparing to cast a spell. A dazzling golden light suddenly appeared in the skies, shining down upon Ning's Heaven Punisher. This sort of constrictive spell, however, was almost negligible to something as powerful as Ning's Heaven Punisher. Most likely, only ten Pure Yang True Immortals casting the same type of spell simultaneously would be enough to tie Ning down.

"Let's fight together!" Five more nearby Zhuyan Apes charged forward in unison.

However...despite being slowed down slightly by the spell, Ning was still able to bound forward far more quickly than the five were. He soon arrived next to the fleeing Zhuyan Ape.

Although the terrified Zhuyan Ape wanted to block, the difference in power between him and Ning was far, far too great.

Ning's Heaven Punisher leapt forward, his right hand chopping

downwards as sword-light flashed.

Swish!

A simian head went flying, and the white-furred Zhuyan Ape completely disintegrated, revealing the utterly terrified Immortals that had been inside of it.

BOOM! A palm-leaf fan appeared within Ning's hands. Ning swung it towards the many fleeing Immortals, some of whom were using evasive techniques while others were hiding within Immortal estates. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Countless Immortal estates were instantly disintegrated, with only a very small number of extremely powerful Immortal estates being able to safely withstand the power of Ning's palm-leaf fan.

Alas, the Yin-Yang Arcane Ki Bottle appeared before Ning as well. The bottle began to ravenously devour all of the surviving estates, swallowing all of them and the Immortals inside them.

In this war, they had to wipe out all living creatures on the enemy's side!

If he merely destroyed the Zhuyan Ape and allowed the majority of the Immortals to escape, they would quickly be used to form yet another army.

"Let's attack!"

"Damn him!"

There were now a total of eight Zhuyan Apes surrounding Ning, as well as two Pure Yang True Immortals.

In truth, in a battle like this, both sides would quickly end up in a deadlocked quagmire. Only at the very beginning would there be a tiny chance to achieve a quick victory, and Ning used that chance to completely destroy that Zhuyan Ape! Only a few dozen Celestial Immortals with exceptionally astonishing evasive techniques had

been able to escape.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning, all by himself, wildly assaulted those eight Zhuyan Apes. Even after having joined forces together, the eight were still being utterly dominated and outclassed. Fortunately, they had two Pure Yang True Immortals supporting them, allowing them to just barely hold on.

“Darknorth, we’re coming!”

“Nice kill, Darknorth!”

Instantly, the Heaven Punishers of Celestial Immortal Unity, Celestial Immortal Dustfloat, and a few others came charging from behind to help Ning.

“Kill!” The White-Faced Flood Dragons of the Seamless Gate were drawing near as well.

Soon...

Ning’s combat region became a fairly densely populated battlefield. Almost a tenth of the full power of each side was concentrated within this region.

“So that’s Ji Ning? The Godking seems to pay a great deal of attention to him.” The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater were quite accustomed to battlefields. They had already transformed into their true Diremonster forms. Of the three, the eldest brother known as the ‘Great Sage Who Swallows The Mountains’ was actually a gold-feathered eagle. His wings allowed him to move as fast as a streak of lightning; in terms of speed, this ‘Great Sage Who Swallows The Mountains’ was the fastest one on this field of battle!

The second brother, the Great Sage Who Swallows The Seas, was an ugly dragon that had broken horns and a completely pitch-black body. He swam through the battlefield, his claws striking out with such power that space itself shattered apart.

The third brother, the Great Sage Who Swallows The Skies, was a nine-headed lion that was as massive and majestic as a mountain. Every step he took caused the world to shudder with a strange, inexplicable cadence. Even when the Pangu War-Formations on the side of the Crimsonbright Realm collided head-on against the nine-headed lion, they would be knocked backwards by it.

It must be understood that even True Immortal Whitepole, when going all out, was just barely strong enough to tie down a Pangu War-Formation.

Each of these three Diremonster Gods possessed overwhelming power, so mighty that it could be said that not a single Empyrean God or True Immortal of the Crimsonbright Realm could compare to them on this field of battle. In turn, none of the Empyrean Gods or True Immortals of the Seamless Gate who were taking part in this battle could compare to them either.

Their fame had long since spread throughout the Three Realms.

"Let me give that Ji Ning a test." The gold-feathered eagle, the Great Sage Who Swallows The Mountains, let out a loud laugh, then gave his wings a flap.

Swish!

With but that one motion, he threw himself straight towards Ning like a streak of light, moving at an utterly astonishing speed.

"Follow him!"

"Don't let him run off!"

There were a total of six Empyrean Gods/True Immortals on a ship of pure light, with the Xia Emperor one of them. These six were riding on a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the Worldspan Lightship. It was only thanks to the speed of this ship that they were able to keep up with the gold-feathered eagle. Of the three Diremonster Gods, the eldest wasn't actually the strongest, but he was definitely the fastest.

If he was allowed to run about as he pleased on the battlefield, with no one tying him down...he would be incredibly deadly.

Thus, the responsibility of the Xia Emperor and the rest of the six was to keep an eye on him and tie him down.

"Chasing me?" The gold-feathered eagle let out a snicker, making sudden and unexpected left and right turns as he moved through the field of battle.

When moving in straight lines, the Worldspan Lightship was actually slightly faster than the gold-feathered eagle...but in terms of agility, it couldn't compare.

"We're coming as well."

"Whoever kills Ji Ning will have won a great victory. His bounty is worth more than the bounty of twenty ordinary Heaven Punishers!" The other two Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater all immediately charged towards Ning as well. When they attacked, certain forces of the Crimsonbright Realm were forced to give chase. Multiple Raindragons and Pangu War-Formations frantically attacked them, but the two were still able to force their way towards Ji Ning's direction.

.....

"Ji Ning."

The gold-feathered eagle quickly reached Ning's location, and it charged straight towards him.

Although Ning was currently battling others, he was still keeping an eye on his surroundings. His side had managed to kill some foes, but the Seamless Gate had killed some of them as well. The six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian were particularly deadly; after they joined together into the 'Six Unities Formation', the six of them were able to support each other and sweep through their foes with power far greater than each of them could individually muster. The

combined strikes of these six Diremonster Gods had slain two Heaven Punishers and destroyed a Pangu War-Formation. In the end, it had taken three full Raindragons to tie them down!

But of course, the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on Ning's side were similarly extraordinary, also gaining many victories.

This initial clash had already resulted in countless casualties for both sides.

While watching the overall battlefield, Ning suddenly saw from the corner of his eyes a flashing golden light.

"Is that...? Ah, the eldest brother of the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater?" When Ning saw the massive, terrifyingly fast gold-feathered eagle fly towards him, he was instantly shocked.

Whoosh! Instantly growing cautious, Ning's weapons instantly transformed into two shields.

"Die for me, puny human." The gold-feathered eagle pounced upon Ning, its sharp talons gouging towards him like terrifyingly sharp hooks.

Ning just stood there on the ground, not moving to dodge at all.

In the instant that the attacks of the gold-feathered eagle reached him, Ning brandished the shields in his arms. Boom! They struck head-on against the sharp claws of the gold-feathered eagle. Now that he was commanding three times as many Immortals, his Heaven Punisher was faster than it had been in the past, especially its arms, which were both dexterous and strong. Given that the shields he was using were quite large, he was able to completely block this strange, profound, terrifying claw attack.

BOOM!

The gold-feathered eagle was actually sent spinning backwards through the skies, only coming to a halt a few moments later. This

instantly caused the always arrogant and brash Diremonster God, the Great Sage Who Swallows The Mountains, to feel completely humiliated and enraged. "Second brother, third brother, get over here! This Ji Ning guy is tremendously strong!"

Chapter 34 – Lying Hidden

“Coming! Big brother, let me give him a try.” The nine-headed lion was like mobile mountain range, smashing straight through all opposition and pushing aside the Pangu War-Formations, Raindragons, and Heaven Punishers in his path.

Although the second brother of the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, that ugly dragon with snapped horns, was actually more agile than the other three, it clearly found it rather difficult to traverse the battlefield. It wasn’t as fast as the clumsy-looking nine-headed lion.

Ji Ning could sense space around him shudder. He glanced sideways, instantly seeing the nine-headed lion charge straight towards him. He couldn’t help but feel shocked: “Him? The most powerful of the three Diremonster Gods...the nine-headed lion?”

Nine-headed lions were Godbeasts.

It was the only one of the three who had a truly exalted bloodline, one which was comparable to that of nine-tailed foxes and Five Elements peacocks.

It was normally quite low-key and unobtrusive, but in actual power it was the strongest of the three. The nine-headed lion was ranked amongst the very top experts in the entire Three Realms, comparable to the likes of Lu Dongbin. But of course, Lu Dongbin was a Ki Refiner, whereas the nine-headed lion was both a Ki Refiner and a Fiendgod Body Refiner, resulting in Lu Dongbin being at an innate disadvantage.

“I heard that his strength is comparable to Patriarch Lu’s.” Ning didn’t dare to be overconfident.

“Perfect timing, third brother!” The airborne gold-feathered eagle was delighted.

The nine-headed lion was bounding across the ground towards Ning, all of the Fiendgods and Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate parting before it.

Ning held those two shields in his hands, not dodging in the slightest.

"I want to see how powerful someone who supposedly stands at the very top tier of power amongst Empyrean Gods and True Immortals is." Ning's heart was filled with a desire to do battle. The nine-headed lion...Empyrean God RedSnow...Patriarch Lu...all of them stood at the very peak of power for Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. Each of them were very close to True Gods and Daofathers in power. However, Ning would never have a chance to test his Heaven Punisher out in power against Patriarch Lu and Empyrean god RedSnow.

Of course, Ning's true body was within the underwater estate, and had sparred with Empyrean God RedSnow before. However... RedSnow, as the leader of the seven Empyrean Gods, had been praised by even Subhuti himself as someone who was just a hairs-breadth away from the Daofather level of power. When Ning's true body had dueled RedSnow, Ning had lost catastrophically.

On this field of battle, however, Ning's Primaltwin had the power of a Pure Yang True Immortal and the power of the Heaven Punisher Formation supporting him. Ning absolutely wasn't afraid of giving him a fight!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The ground quivered as the nine-headed lion charged towards Ning, and as Ning leaped forward towards it.

"Hmph." A savage light flashed through the eyes of the nine-headed lion. It lowered its heads, a layer of golden light emerging from them and covering its entire body.

Ning hunkered downwards, the two shields in his hands as he rammed straight forward.

Both sides were fighting head-on against each other.

Nine-headed lions were Godbeasts that were famous for their strength, and this Great Sage Who Devours the Skies had a particularly deep level of insight into the Dao, making him even more incredible.

Ning's strength didn't need to be described; on the battlefield, he had ravaged the many experts of the Seamless Gate.

BOOM!!!!

The nine-headed lion felt a flood of power sweep through it. There was no skill, no tricks to it; it was a surge of absolutely incredible raw power, causing it to stumble backwards uncontrollably. The nine-headed lion had no time to feel stunned; it hurriedly used an evasive technique, causing the surrounding space to become illusory as it retreated by a thousand kilometers in a manner that displayed no openings.

"Such power." Ning felt a strange, powerful vibration transmitted towards him.

It wasn't just pure, raw power; it was a type of vibration. The sort of vibration one might feel when an earthquake hit, a vibration that couldn't simply be blocked or deflected. Ning immediately understood. No wonder all of the armies on their side, be it the Pangu War-Formations, the Raindragons, or the Heaven Punishers, were knocked backwards! In addition, the nine-headed lion's headlong charge didn't seem to have consumed much power.

This was actually a type of profound, high level technique!

Although Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher possessed nigh-infinite strength, it still couldn't help but take three steps back before the vibrating power dissipated.

"He really is strong!" The distant nine-headed lion laughed loudly, his laughter echoing throughout the battlefield. "Come, again!"

"You think I'm afraid of you?" Ning's Heaven Punisher once more charged forward.

Boom! Boom!

Ning and the nine-headed lion clashed repeatedly on the field of battle. Each time, Ning only took three steps back. While the nine-headed lion had a profound grasp over the Dao, with each step on the ground seeming to cause the ground to twist and space to distort, the difference in raw power was simply too great. Each time, the nine-headed lion would still be forced to dodge backwards by a thousand kilometers..

"Third brother, if the three of us join together to form the Three-Eyed God, would we be able to kill this Ji Ning?" The airborne gold-feathered eagle, still being harried by the Xia Emperor and the others, sent a mental message.

"Third brother, big brother and I are waiting for you to give the word." The dragon with the shattered horns was flying around the area as well.

The three Diremonster Gods were capable of setting up a formation to form a Three-Eyed God.

The Three-Eyed God was primarily led by the most powerful of the three brothers, the nine-headed lion. It was very similar to the Seven Planets Empyrean God, which was formed by the seven Empyrean Gods of the Starseizing Manor but primarily led by Redsnow. Redsnow and the nine-headed lion had the highest level of insights into the Dao in their respective squads, and they were the strongest in battle as well.

"I'm not certain," the nine-headed lion sent mentally. "This Ji Ning is very skilled in commanding his Heaven Punisher, and his strength is

too incredible. Even if we join forces together into the Three-Eyed God...in a one-on-one fight, we'd naturally be able to kill him, but a large number of experts of the Crimsonbright Realm are nearby. They'll frantically assail us, which means we'll have a very low chance of killing him, less than thirty percent at most."

"Mm." Both the gold-feathered eagle and the broken-horn dragon understood.

It was true. The Crimsonbright Realm had sent a total of six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to tie down the gold-feathered eagle, which was the fastest of the three. There were other experts who had been assigned to deal with the broken-horn dragon and the nine-headed lion. As soon as they joined into the Three-Eyed God, the many experts would naturally join forces with Ji Ning against it, giving it less than a thirty percent chance of killing Ji Ning.

"What a powerful nine-headed lion." Ning was stunned by their exchange as well. "It's actually only at a slight disadvantage in a one-on-one fight against me. I'm a Pure Yang True Immortal, and I'm commanding three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals. He's too powerful! If the intelligence reports are correct and they really can join together into a Three-Eyed God, how powerful would that be?! One-on-one, I'd probably be killed quite quickly."

Ning glanced sideways.

Because the three Diremonster Gods were here, a large number of experts of the Crimsonbright Realm had hurried here as well. There were five Raindragons and six Heaven Punishers that were commanded by Empyrean Gods or True Immortals.

This was how much of a threat the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater posed to them.

.....

Atop the walls of the Seamless City. Daofather Ink Bamboo watched the battle for quite some time. Both sides had suffered significant losses, but they continued to battle wildly. The Daofather gave the order: "Pull back."

His voice echoed in the minds of every Seamless Gate commander.

"Pull back."

"Let's go."

"We're done."

The Seamless Gate quickly joined together to begin an orderly, step-by-step retreat back to their camp.

Daofather Crimsonbright was watching this from atop the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Frowning, he gave the order as well: "Pull back and rest."

.....

Atop the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"Ji Ning, how did it go? How were our losses, compared to the losses of the Seamless Gate?" Celestial Immortals Unity, Whacko, Dustfloat, Allbeasts, and Rainsoar had gathered together with Ning. The six had battled together for many years and were very close to each other; they were a tight-knit squad which advanced and retreated in unison on the battlefield.

"Right. On the battlefield, we didn't have any spare energy to watch the others," Celestial Immortal Dustfloat added.

Ning sighed. "Both sides suffered significant losses, roughly ten thousand Celestial Immortals each. I'm not sure of the exact numbers. The Xia Emperor should know."

"We lost that many?"

"That's not bad; the Seamless Gate has many more golems than us. For us to match them in casualties isn't bad."

"This was just our first engagement. The Realmwar is going to be crazy..."

They all let out sighs.

In the past, this had merely been a war for the Grand Xia. Now, it was a Realmwar. It must be understood that the Xia Emperor had only commanded a total of ten thousand Celestial Immortals, and despite so many years of battle, more than half remained alive. But today...ten thousand had died in a single engagement!

.....

Battle. Rest. Battle again a while later. Rest again.

This became the cadence of the Realmwar.

Battling for too long would result in one's magic energy and divine power being drained. If they were forced to fight nonstop, they would have to eat Immortal pills to replenish their energy, which neither side was particularly willing to do. Thus, after fighting for a while, they would withdraw their forces to rest.

On the surface, each clash was simple and didn't result in heavy losses.

Both sides, however, were searching for an opportunity...and once they found it, the seemingly morasse of a battle would instantly explode. When that happened, large numbers of Celestial Immortals would perish, and even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would fall. It must be understood that despite having clashed three times, not a single Empyrean God or True Immortal had fallen yet!

Even when a Pangu War-Formation was destroyed, the commanding Empyrean God had easily escaped.

Since neither Empyrean Gods nor True Immortals had perished, the war clearly had yet to reach the critical point yet.

.....

Within the vast world of darkness.

The Godking was seated upon his towering throne, levitating high in the air and staring down at the masses from his position in the center of the world.

"Godking." A figure was kneeling before the throne.

"This Realmwar has seen three clashes thus far. Daofather Ink Bamboo has essentially finished calculating the Crimsonbright Realm's power, as well as some of their hidden forces. It's time for a fatal attack." The Godking looked down towards the kneeling figure. "You've been hiding by Daofather Crimsonbright's side for so long... it's time for you to unleash your power."

"Your subordinate has been awaiting this day for a long, long time," the kneeling figure said respectfully, his voice filled with eagerness.

"After this battle, your status will have been exposed, and you will no longer be able to remain with the Nuwa Alliance. Come straight to the Seamless Gate. You are the key to this battle; don't disappoint me," the Godking said.

The kneeling figure said, "Your subordinate has been waiting and hiding for countless years for this moment! Everything I've endured... all the lies...it was so that I could explode forth at this moment. Even if I die, I won't disappoint you, Godking."

"Good. Of my many minions, you've always been the most dazzling one. After you return to the Seamless Gate, I'll personally accept you as my disciple and give you the three Protocosmic spirit-treasures of the 'Vacant Sword Formation,'" the Godking said.

Upon hearing the words 'Vacant Sword Formation', the kneeling

figure instantly grew excited. Raising his head, he said resolutely, "Godking, just watch and see."

The upraised face...

Was that of Sword Immortal Evergreen!

Chapter 35 – Evergreen Reveals Himself!

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity. The main palace.

Daofather Crimsonbright sat on the throne. Below him sat a host of Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and Celestial Immortal commanders, Ji Ning amongst them.

"Both Daofather Ink Bamboo and myself have been keeping an eye on our respective armies." Daofather Crimsonbright looked downwards upon his subjects. "We are both trying to suss out the true strength of each other's forces, find a weakness, then launch a fatal attack! The Seamless Gate's greatest advantage lies in its intelligence network, making it much easier for them to investigate us. Based on the multiple Realmwars which have occurred within the Three Realms...the Seamless Gate often launches a fatal attack first. Thus, I have to warn you...the more battles that occur, the greater the chances that the Seamless Gate will launch an all-out fatal attack on the next one. You have to be vigilant at all times.

"Master." The Xia Emperor said worriedly, "To always be vigilant isn't a winning solution...when will we launch our own all-out attack?"

Daofather Crimsonbright nodded. "I understand what you are saying, of course. However...I can dimly sense that the Seamless Gate has another force that is lying in wait. I have to hold some of my forces in abeyance to deal with it. Otherwise...if we launch our all-out attack, we might end up being tricked and countered by the Seamless Gate, resulting in a great loss."

Everyone, Ji Ning included, nodded.

There was nothing for it.

Whenever there was a significant disparity in intelligence, the only choice was to allow the enemy to strike first. Perhaps one might suffer a bit for it, but they would still be able to deal with the forces they saw. If they revealed all of their trump cards at once in an

attack...their fate would be completely up to luck.

"There's one thing we can be certain of." Daofather Crimsonbright looked at Ning. "Ji Ning."

"Daofather," Ning replied respectfully.

Daofather Crimsonbright looked at Ning. "You have a talent for commanding Heaven Punishers. Once you breakthrough to become a Pure Yang True Immortal, the power of your Heaven Punisher shall explode to a new level. Thus, the Seamless Gate is definitely going to try and kill you to avoid future problems! The intelligence we've obtained regarding them concurs; they've wanted to get rid of you this entire time."

"During each of the past three battles, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater have been in your surrounding area," Daofather Crimsonbright said. "This has resulted in much of both side's forces being concentrated around you, roughly 30% or so of the entire battlefield. Minor battles are going on in other places; the only place where both sides are concentrating their forces is the area around you. Once an all-out attack is launched, that place will be the most dangerous place on the entire battlefield...and the first target they will want to eliminate is you, Ji Ning."

"Xiamang."

Daofather Crimsonbright looked towards the Xia Emperor. "Stay next to him and assist him. You have to protect Ji Ning; be wary of any sudden changes in the battlefield."

"Yes, Master," the Xia Emperor said respectfully.

"The rest of you need to keep an eye out as well. Even if the other minor battlefields take a turn for the worse, casualties will be limited. The region around Ji Ning and Xiamang, however...once there are casualties there, the casualties will be heavy, so heavy as to potentially change the entire dynamic. You need to keep an eye out

and be prepared to deal with anything on the fly," Daofather Crimsonbright instructed.

"Yes, Daofather."

"Yes, Master."

Daofather Crimsonbright nodded. "Alright. You can go back and rest now."

Ning and the hundreds of Immortals and Fiendgods present all walked out of the main palace. Only after exiting did they start to discuss matters in small groups.

"Ji Ning, if you can just keep those three from Mount Dragoneater tied down, you'll have rendered a major contribution," the Xia Emperor said, walking alongside Ning. "Don't be in a rush to try and kill enemies; keep an eye out for those three at all times."

"Right. Darknorth, if you are defeated, we'll have lost a powerful military unit. For you right now, not screwing up is already a contribution." A bald old man in loose robes next to them chuckled while fanning himself with a fan.

"Right now, you are our main defense against those three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater."

Multiple Empyrean Gods and True Immortals spoke out. They were all responsible for tying down those three Diremonster Gods, and so during the three clashes of this Realmwar, they had been by Ji Ning's side. To be honest, it was rather strange; those three Diremonster Gods were always close to Ning. The main reason for this was that the Godking viewed Ning as an extremely important target, believing that if Ning suddenly broke through to the Pure Yang True Immortal level, his Heaven Punisher would instantly rise to a level of power where it would be no weaker than the combined power of those three Diremonster Gods.

"To be honest, with Ji Ning around, it makes things easier for us. His

Heaven Punisher is so strong, not even those three Diremonster Gods can suppress him."

"Ji Ning is indeed formidable as a Heaven Punisher commander. If he becomes a Pure Yang True Immortal...how powerful would he become?"

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals continued to chat with Ning and amongst themselves.

Suddenly, someone walked past them. It was Sword Immortal Evergreen, who gave them a sideways glance and a cold snort. "All of you are quite smug, aren't you? Don't forget...if Ji Ning dies in battle, the entire situation will become quite ugly for us. As I see it...you need to focus on what you will do in the event that Ji Ning dies."

After finishing his words, Sword Immortal Evergreen walked out.

Ning frowned upon hearing these words. On the surface, Sword Immortal Evergreen was reminding them to be careful...but he kept on saying 'Ji Ning dies', 'Ji Ning dies'...anyone would feel displeased upon hearing someone say such things.

"Ji Ning, don't mind him." The Xia Emperor glanced at Sword Immortal Evergreen, frowning at him before turning to smile at Ning. "That's just how junior apprentice-brother Evergreen is. Still...he's not wrong to remind us that we need to be careful."

"Understood." Ning nodded.

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth." After Sword Immortal Evergreen walked away, a delicate, white-robed female Immortal who had heard his words walked towards Ning and hurriedly said, "Senior apprentice-brother Evergreen is always like that. Please don't mind him."

Ning smiled. "A minor matter, fellow Daoist Snowdance."

Fairy Snowdance smiled towards Ning, then followed Sword Immortal Evergreen in leaving.

Ning asked the nearby Xia Emperor, "What is the exact relationship between Fairy Snowdance and Sword Immortal Evergreen? I often see them together, and even on the field of battle, they are an inseparable duo."

"Junior apprentice-sister Snowdance is devoted to junior apprentice-brother Evergreen, but he is excessively solitary and aloof; he's completely unreceptive to her advances. She, however, continues to quietly watch over him. Although the two haven't joined together to become Dao-companions, Evergreen is indeed closer to Snowdance than to any of our other fellow disciples. Still...in the end, he always treats her in an icy manner. Junior apprentice-sister Snowdance really is blinded," a barbaric-looking man said with a sigh.

"Evergreen's simply too sharp. His heart is like a sword, and he acts like a sword in dealing with both people and business. He's let her wait for him for so long...alas..."

The various Empyrean Gods and True Immortals chatted amongst themselves for a bit, then all departed.

.....

A few days later, the Xia Emperor sent the mental order for his army to assemble.

"Be careful. You said it yourself; the Seamless Gate is trying to kill you if at all possible. Our child is soon to be born; I don't want our child to never have the chance to meet you," Yu Wei warned.

"Don't worry, senior apprentice-sister; the Seamless Gate is far from being able to kill me," Ning said with a laugh.

Since the start of the Realmwar, before each clash Yu Wei would give Ning many warnings to be careful.

"I'm off." Ning smiled, then transformed into a streak of light and flew away.

Yu Wei rubbed her stomach, watching as Ning flew away. She could sense that their child was most likely going to enter the world in around half a month...but why was it that she was feeling increasingly nervous?

.....

The vast, awe-inspiring army had assembled, then flown out from the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. The wilderness outside the city had long been transformed into a desolate, crater-ridden wasteland. The two opposing armies once more charged against each other, and everything was as it had been in the past.

Soldiers against soldiers. Generals against generals.

Both sides were now experienced with each other. The heaviest casualties had come in the first clash, while the following clashes had seen much fewer deaths. In this clash, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater once more had their sights set on Ji Ning.

“Once the opportunity arises, you have to kill this Ji Ning. The most important mission you have in this Realmwar is to kill Ji Ning.”

These were the instructions which both Daofather Ink Bamboo and the Godking had given them.

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Both sides were evenly matched.

“Junior apprentice-sister, those six Heaven Punishers are in danger; let’s go help them.” Sword Immortal Evergreen and Fairy Snowdance were flying through the sky. Sword Immortal Evergreen scanned the field of battle, then sent a mental message to her.

Fairy Snowdance glanced over as well.

Far from from, within the region where Ning and the three

Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater were, six Heaven Punishers were being assaulted by three White-Faced Flood Dragons, with one of them apparently being commanded by an Empyrean God or True Immortal. They were clearly superior to the six Heaven Punishers in power, but the Heaven Punishers weren't in any real danger yet; by joining forces, they were able to stave off defeat.

Still...Fairy Snowdance didn't refuse. "Fine, senior apprentice-brother."

Swoosh! Swoosh!

They immediately flew down to the battlefield, beginning to cast spells and use their magic treasures to support those six Heaven Punishers. With their help, the six instantly found the battle much easier, and in fact they were even able to seize the advantage.

"Senior apprentice-brother, be careful; this region is the most dangerous region in the entire battlefield," Fairy Snowdance sent mentally. "Both sides have sent more than twenty Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to this place, and we have over fifty Heaven Punishers here, as well as Raindragons and Pangu War-Formations..."

"Don't worry," Evergreen said confidently. "We just need to be careful."

"Right." Fairy Snowdance was just giving him a reminder; thus far, not a single Empyrean God or True Immortal had died in this Realmwar. As long as there wasn't a sudden change in events, it wasn't likely that one of them would die.

Sword Immortal Evergreen continued to cast spells to help the Heaven Punishers below while keeping a careful eye on the battlefield.

The Xia Emperor, one of the six Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on his ship of light, noticed that Sword Immortal Evergreen and Fairy

Snowdance had arrived as well. It must be understood that the Xia Emperor was controlling the local formation; he naturally saw everything that happened on the battlefield, and he generally would arrange for the disposition of their forces. He immediately sent mentally, "Junior apprentice-brother Evergreen, junior apprentice-sister Snowdance, go and help out those five Heaven Punishers to your left; they are in serious danger."

"Alright." Sword Immortal Evergreen and Fairy Snowdance immediately noticed it as well. Those five were indeed suffering a group attack, and there were no other Empyrean Gods or True Immortals nearby, aside from the two of them.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two flew in that direction while casting their spells.

"Go." Fairy Snowdance pointed, and instantly a snowy-white lance pierced through the skies.

Slash!

Suddenly, a streak of sword-light flashed past her. Blood splattered everywhere, and as the blood splattered on the snowy white lance of light, it was instantly frozen.

Fairy Snowdance stared at her chest uncomprehendingly. A sword had pierced straight through it, cutting quite cleanly through her Pure Yang Jindan. She raised her head to look towards Sword Immortal Evergreen in disbelief. "Senior, senior apprentice-brother..." In her heart, there was one thing she wanted to say: "If you want to join the Seamless Gate, I'm willing to join you..."

Fairy Snowdance revealed a hint of a smile...the smile of release.

Snick. Sword Immortal Evergreen pulled his sword out, and as his sword-ki trembled...her entire body was instantly turned into dust, her treasures left for Sword Immortal Evergreen to pick up.

In his heart, Sword Immortal Evergreen felt a certain dull pain. "If you spend years raising a dog, you'll feel pain when it dies." Sword Immortal Evergreen immediately wiped away the tiny bit of pity he felt in his heart, then looked downwards. He charged straight downwards, charging towards those five Heaven Punishers. Not only did not he not support them, he launched an assault that caused those five to feel utterly shocked.

"EVERGREEN!" The distant Xia Emperor saw this happen. Upon seeing Fairy Snowdance's chest be pierced, his eyes widened so much they threatened to split apart. He let out an utterly enraged roar that caused the heavens themselves to tremble!

Chapter 36 – The War Changes

Sword Immortal Evergreen paid no attention to the Xia Emperor's furious roar at all. His eyes flashed with red light; clearly, he had gone berserk. "I, Evergreen, have waited for so many years...and this day shall be my most glorious, most dazzling moment." He fully released all of his hidden power, and the Immortal swords he controlled transformed into three streaks of azure-black sword-light that pierced through the skies.

"No!"

"Sword Immortal Evergreen..."

"Spy!"

"Traitor!"

The five Heaven Punishers felt completely despair.

They were already in a dangerous situation, having suffered a group assault by the forces of the Seamless Gate; that was the reason why the Xia Emperor had sent Sword Immortal Evergreen and Fairy Snowdance to reinforce them. If they hadn't, the five Heaven Punishers wouldn't have been able to hold on for much longer. Sword Immortal Evergreen had slain Fairy Snowdance, then unleashed an attack that wasn't one whit inferior to the attacks of True Immortal Whitepole or the Xia Emperor. This terrifying attack was not meant to reinforce them...it was meant to kill them.

How could the five Heaven Punishers possibly resist?

Slash! Boom! Swish!

Under repeated assaults from Sword Immortal Evergreen, Zhuyan Apes, White-Faced Flood Dragons, and Empyrean God golems...the five Heaven Punishers instantly were shattered into tiny pieces.

The local battlefield, which held 30% of the forces of each side, had just changed dramatically!

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The walls of the Seamless City.

Daofather Ink Bamboo was watching this entire battle from afar. The Godking had secretly told him long ago that the Seamless Gate had hidden an extremely important chess piece within the forces of the Crimsonbright Realm, a chess piece which, when employed at the right moment, could cause the entire course of the battle to change. As for who that chess piece was, Daofather Ink Bamboo didn't know. Only the Godking himself knew. Clearly, this was an extremely important secret.

"Eh?" Daofather Ink Bamboo's eyes lit up. He couldn't help but feel overjoyed when he saw Sword Immortal Evergreen suddenly kill Fairy Snowdance, then assault the five Heaven Punishers below.

In the blink of an eye...all five Heaven Punishers were destroyed!

The local battlefield had instantly changed. The Crimsonbright Realm had lost two Pure Yang True Immortals and five Heaven Punishers, whereas the Seamless Gate had not only gained the powerful Sword Immortal Evergreen, the forces that had been assaulting the five Heaven Punishers were freed up as well.

"Launch an all-out attack!" Daofather Ink Bamboo knew how rare an opportunity like this was. He immediately sent out the order.

"Launch an all-out attack!"

The Daofather's voice rang out in the minds of every single commander, Empyrean God, and True Immortal of the Seamless Gate.

"Attack!" The Nine Cloudmist Fairies, who had previously been locked into a stalemate, suddenly exploded with power.

"Attack!" The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, who had been battling separately in the region, all revealed looks of joy. Diremonster God Skyswaller roared loudly, "Assemble into formation!" Instantly, the three Diremonster Gods charged towards each other, joining together into formation. Divine power flowed across them like light, quickly transforming them into a towering, bald, three-eyed Fiendgod.

The Three-Eyed Demon's aura was utterly unearthly.

"Attack!"

The various White-Faced Flood Dragons and Zhuyan Apes actually began to crumble.

But as they crumbled...they reformed into multiple Empyrean God golems. Each White-Faced Flood Dragon instantly transformed into ten Empyrean God golems!

.....

The entire battlefield had suddenly changed.

"Evergreen!" Even as the Xia Emperor roared with rage, Ji Ning saw Evergreen make his move as well. He was watching the entire battlefield at all times. He couldn't help but feel disbelief as he saw it happen. Although he didn't have any positive feelings towards Sword Immortal Evergreen, he had never suspected that Evergreen was actually a spy for the Seamless Gate. Fairy Snowdance had followed him for so long...how could he have been hard-hearted enough to actually kill her?

"Vile creature!" Ning ground his teeth, rage blazing within his heart.

"Launch an all-out attack!" A heartbeat after Daofather Ink Bamboo gave the order, Daofather Crimsonbright's voice rang out in the minds of his subordinates as well. "Launch an all-out attack!"

"Time to go all out!"

The Crimsonbright Realm and the Seamless Gate almost simultaneously began to launch their most powerful attacks.

.....

Within one of the minor worlds of the Three Realms.

A dirty-looking middle-aged man was displaying his martial prowess, leading a group of beggars at high speed towards a large innhouse.

"Kids, seal that door up!" The dirty-looking beggar called out.

"Yes!"

The group of beggars completely blocked up the doorway, terrifying the guests and customers who had been eating inside it and preventing any outsiders from entering.

"Honorable sir, if there's something you want, just tell us. Why have you brought so many people to seal off my innhouse?" The innkeeper hurriedly came out, bowing and scraping.

"If the Beggar's Clan wishes to block your door, we'll block your door! I've never liked you. Today I've come to eat something," the middle-aged beggar barked. "Got a problem?"

"No problems, no problems at all." The innkeeper felt misery in his hearts; he knew exactly how powerful the Beggar's Clan was within this city. Fortunately, these people were just here to eat. "If you want something to eat, just tell me."

"Simple. Gimme..." Halfway through his words, the look on the face of the middle-aged beggar changed.

This was because, right at this moment, a voice rang out within his mind: "Eastbreak, come to the Grand Xia battlefield right away."

When the Realmwar had first started, he had been told that he would serve as a lethal weapon for the Crimsonbright Realm. To

prevent the Seamless Gate from finding out, the only people who were aware of this were two Daofathers and the 'beggar' himself. Even the message-delivery system was an extremely secretive one. He had been extremely careful, and indeed, the Seamless Gate hadn't discovered him.

The beggar raised his head.

A black light flashed.

Boom!

A large rift suddenly appeared in the skies above him. The middle-aged beggar took a single step, soaring into the rift in the skies...and then the massive rift vanished as well.

The guests, beggars, and innkeeper were all completely dazed by what they had just seen.

"Clan...clan leader...?" The beggars stared stupidly.

"The person extorting me was...was actually..." The innkeeper was even more dazed.

"A divinity. A divinity!"

"He must have been an Immortal."

In fact, the countless mortals in the region all fell to their knees, kowtowing. They had seen this Immortal with their own eyes. The massive rift in the skies...the aura of power and majesty from it...it had filled the deepest parts of their hearts with utter terror and awe. They would never even think of resisting such power.

.....

The Grand Xia. The battlefield within Whitepole Commandery.

Boom...

A massive rift appeared, and the middle-aged beggar with tousled hair appeared out of nowhere. He had been roaming a minor mortal world that was located very close to the Grand Xia, and so as soon as the order had come, he had been able to immediately tear a rift through the Void to arrive here.

“Eastbreak.”

“Eastbreak, the divine archer!”

The forces of the Seamless Gate who saw the middle-aged beggar appear were all terrified.

Eastbreak...

Ever since the great divinity Houyi had vanished, the most powerful divine archers of the Three Realms had consisted of Eastbreak and his peers. Empyrean God Eastbreak possessed tremendous power, and his heartforce had reached the peak of the fourth level. His divine arrows...they had more than enough power to cause each and every Empyrean God and True Immortal to feel utter terror.

“So what if Eastbreak has come? We have many allies on the battlefield; two or three Empyrean Gods and True Immortals can combine their power to block his arrows.”

“How can a single Eastbreak possibly have an impact on our great army?”

But just as they were consoling themselves...

The divine archer Eastbreak produced a gray fruit in his hands. He swallowed it, then manifested a silvery-white greatbow as well as a black arrow. He nocked his bow, then drew it, the tip of the arrow covered with a blurry gray energy aura.

“Chaos Daofruit?”

“The power of primordial chaos?”

"Not good."

The arrow flashed!

It lanced through the skies!

"Argh!!" "No!" Three White-Faced Flood Dragons were pierced by that black streak of light. The three White-Faced Flood Dragons immediately collapsed, revealing the Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals inside.

A single arrow had slain three of the White-Faced Flood Dragons.

Eastbreak pulled back his bow yet again.

"Madman. He's using both the power of primordial chaos and filling his arrows with heartforce. Given his terrifying archery skills...his arrows are almost comparable to a Daofather's strikes. They even cause spatial compression; we won't even have a chance to hide into our Immortal estates. But he's going after the White-Faced Flood Dragons and the Bifang Cranes instead of us?" The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were both furious and frantic...because they knew that Empyrean God Eastbreak was making the right choice.

He was extremely close to the Daofather level to begin with. By relying on the power of the Daofruit of primordial chaos, his full-strength arrow attacks had already reached the level of power a Daofather's attacks would have. But of course, he paid a heavy price for this; a single chaos Daofruit would most likely only be enough to allow him to shoot two arrows, with each fruit representing a True God or Daofather sacrificing some of their insights into the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos.

It must be understood that the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on both sides were moving in pairs or triplets; in fact, some of them were moving in groups of seven or eight. If he used his arrows to assault Empyrean Gods or True Immortals, they would be able to stay alive by joining forces to defend. Even if he did manage to kill an

Empyrean God or a True Immortal, it wouldn't have much of an impact on the overall course of the battle.

But by killing White-Faced Flood Dragons, Bifang Cranes, Zhuyan Apes, and such creatures...he was able to slay two or three with each arrow.

.....

Daofather Ink Bamboo, atop the walls of the Seamless City, just coldly watched as this all happened. He smiled grimly. "The Nuwa Alliance really is willing to spend its resources. They are actually using Daofruit of primordial chaos to allow a single supreme archer to have an impact on the entire war. But despite that...he's only on par with the combined power of the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater. Perhaps the three combined are even slightly weaker than Empyrean God Eastbreak...but they can fight for a long period of time, whereas he is using up a Daofruit every two arrows. Let's see how many arrows he can shoot!

.....

On the battlefield.

Some of the White-Faced Flood Dragons, Bifang Cranes, and Zhuyan Apes had been voluntarily disbanded when the all-out attack was initiated, transforming into multiple Empyrean God golems. After all...a thousand Celestial Immortals could command ten of the Empyrean God golems, while three golems were comparable to each White-Faced Flood Dragon in power. Clearly, using the same number of Celestial Immortals to control the Empyrean God golems was more powerful and effective.

However...manufacturing the golems was very difficult. Daofather Ink Bamboo was only able to have 20% of his Celestial Immortals control the golems...but despite that, the Seamless Gate's forces had just been strengthened dramatically.

To put it another way...although Empyrean God Eastbreak was very valiant, slaying two or three thousand Celestial Immortals with each arrow, his impact merely neutralized the sudden appearance of so many Empyrean God golems.

Right now, the flow of battle within the area where both sides had concentrated 30% of their forces was extremely detrimental to the forces of the Crimsonbright Realm.

"Careful!"

"Hold on!"

"Damn that Evergreen!"

The forces of the Crimsonbright Realm were livid.

The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater's power was within their realm of expectations, and they had planned for it. Sword Immortal Evergreen's betrayal, however, caused their situation to turn uglier than they had expected. It must be understood that in mortal wars, there had been cases where a flag-bearing soldier fell, bringing his flag down with him and resulting in the loss of both the battle and his country.

Sword Immortal Evergreen's slaying of Fairy Snowdance and the five Heaven Punishers, then continued attacks alongside the Seamless Gate against the forces of the Crimsonbright Realm...it had caught them completely offguard. Unable to reinforce each other in time, they lost another Raindragon, two Pangu War-Formations, and six more Heaven Punishers. Only after such heavy losses was Evergreen forced back by the utterly berserk forces of the Crimsonbright Realm, driving him into the protective embrace of the three Diremonster Gods.

But alas, the state of the battle around Ji Ning had turned horribly grim for the Crimsonbright Realm.

The disparity in power between two sides was now enormous.

Chapter 37 – Seven Seniors, Please Assist

The city walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Daofather Crimsonbright was watching over the entire battlefield, his heart scorching with worry. He immediately saw how ugly the situation had become in the area where Ji Ning and the Xia Emperor were battling. Sword Immortal Evergreen had launched his traitorous attack there, causing a minor collapse in the battle lines of the Crimsonbright Realm. Fortunately, the Xia Emperor and Ji Ning had gone all out to hold their positions, allowing things to settle down... but the situation was still extremely grim.

“There’s nothing I can do. The many Empyrean God golems that just appeared on the Seamless Gate’s side are spread out throughout the battlefield. Multiple areas need reinforcements.” Daofather Crimsonbright stared at the battlefield. The distant divine archer, Eastbreak, was sending out arrows like needles from the God of Death. Every single arrow slew two or three White-Faced Flood Dragons, Zhuyan Apes, or other types of Terrorbeasts.

“I can only choose to give up Xiamang’s region for now.”

“Have Eastbreak keep his region suppressed.” Daofather Crimsonbright knew that he had to make his choice right away.

If he had Eastbreak suppress the entire battlefield...because of how bad the situation was for Ji Ning and the Xia Emperor’s area, they would still probably be at a disadvantage. As for the other regions...if Eastbreak wasn’t able to help them out enough, they would probably only be able to reach a stalemate.

Now, however...

With Eastbreak going berserk on a few select regions...although Ji Ning’s region was in trouble, the other seven regions temporarily gained the upper hand!

Eastbreak’s arrows were simply too terrifying. However, both

Daofather Crimsonbright and Daofather Ink Bamboo knew very well that these terrifying arrows used up Daofruits of primordial chaos, with each Daofruit only sustaining two arrows. He wouldn't be able to maintain this state for too long...and so he had to kill as many as he could, while he could!

"Xiamang, your region will have to rely on yourselves." Daofather Crimsonbright hardened his heart. He had experienced the destruction of the Primordial World; he knew that sometimes, sacrifices had to be made for the sake of the bigger picture.

"EVERGREEN!!!"

Daofather Crimsonbright stared at the distant Sword Immortal Evergreen, cold light flaring from his eyes, his face completely ashen!

Humiliation!

He had been catastrophically deceived.

He had trusted Sword Immortal Evergreen too much; he hadn't suspected him of being a spy at all. The main reason for this was because Evergreen normally didn't have any friends; in fact, he was an extremely solitary person who focused completely on the Dao. Evergreen had lived in seclusion within that Daoist temple on his minor world for countless years, focusing on the Dao. It might be easy for a person to pretend for a period of time, but to pretend for their entire life...

Evergreen, however, was terrifying in this regard. In the past, Daofather Crimsonbright had rather admired Evergreen for his temperament and his complete dedication to pursuing the Dao. He had believed that of his many disciples, Evergreen had the best chance of becoming a Daofather.

"Evergreen is focused on pursuing the Dao, and his heart has no other desires; I definitely wasn't wrong about this. When he killed Snowdance, he showed no mercy or hesitancy at all; he didn't even

show the slightest hint of doubt in his eyes. After killing her, he immediately destroyed her corpse. His heart is truly merciless. I wasn't wrong...he is indeed incredibly dangerous." Daofather Crimsonbright knew very well that such a decisive, merciless person would likely become an astonishing figure in the future.

One's level of accomplishments had nothing to do with whether one was virtuous or vile.

The stronger one's Dao-heart was, the easier it would be for one to travel a long distance on the Immortal path.

For the most vile of individuals, even when they did vile things, they wouldn't truly believe themselves to be vile. A completely pure Dao-heart could be a terrifyingly powerful thing, even if that pureness was evil; not even demonheart tribulations and other such tribulations would have an effect on it. However, there were very, very few such 'natural-born devils'. Prior to this, Daofather Crimsonbright hadn't been able to tell that Evergreen was such a person...

.....

The battlefield region where Ning and the Xia Emperor were located.

"Evergreen." Ning was utterly enraged by what he was seeing.

"All-out attack!" The Daofather's order came. The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater temporarily paused their attacks, beginning to join together into a formation.

Taking advantage of the lull offered by the three Diremonster Gods pausing, the enraged Ji Ning charged straight towards Sword Immortal Evergreen.

"F*ck off!"

Ning swept out with his two arms. Boom! Boom! Boom! The Empyrean God golems that had been bothering him were all

knocked flying backwards. The difference in power was simply too great.

"Quick, stop him!"

"Stop him."

A Bifang Crane commanded by an Empyrean God golem flew forward towards him.. This particular Terrorbeast looked like an Immortal crane. Its body was completely azure, and it was bathed in fiery flames as its blazing wings flapped. It only had a single claw, but this claw was enormous and pitch-black. As the Bifang Crane flew forward, its claw ripped forward towards Ning.

As for Ning, he reached out with both arms.

Whoosh!

He grabbed that giant claw with his hands. The Bifang Crane suddenly manifested a black wing in front of it, smashing it down towards Ning.

"Die."

'Wielding' the claw with both hands, Ning smashed the Bifang Crane towards a White-Faced Flood Dragon in front of him. As for the black wing...Ning just gritted his teeth and endured the blow. In this moment, he unleashed all of the power of his soul heartforce technique. By now, he had nearly reached the 'expert' level in the soul heartforce technique; the increase in power was quite noticeable.

This made it so that he was able to take control over increasingly greater amounts of the flood of natural energy being generated by the Heaven Punisher. His body quickly began even stronger and even more resilient.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The black wing slammed against Ning, but it only left behind a small wound.

"How did his strength just..." The Bifang Crane was shocked.

BOOM!

The Bifang Crane was slammed straight down against a White-Faced Flood Dragon, knocking it flying away. Ning kept one hand around the claw of the Bifang Crane, manifesting an incredibly sharp sword within his other hand. Tightening his grip around the sword, he viciously stabbed it towards Bifang Crane's body.

Slash! Slash!

Two lightning-fast sword-strokes passed straight through the Bifang Crane's body, causing it to instantly begin to break apart. Many Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals began to run, with the Pure Yang True Immortal commander the first to flee in terror.

"Die." Two massive shields appeared within Ning's hands, and he smashed them towards each other, with the fleeing Pure Yang True Immortal caught between them!

BOOM!

When the two shields slammed together, countless Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals perished. The True Immortal simultaneously used an evasive technique as well as magic treasures to resist, but Ning had already unleashed his true power. His soul heartforce had nearly reached the expert level, and the amount of power he now unleashed was simply astonishing.

"How could this..." The True Immortal felt a great power sweep through his magic treasures like a sword sweeping through rotted wood. And then...boom! He was completely disintegrated by the collision of the two massive, mountain-like shields.

"Kill him."

"Kill this Ji Ning!"

Off in the distance, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater had already transformed into the Three-Eyed Demon.

They were stunned and furious. They hadn't expected that during the short period of time when they had paused their attacks, Ji Ning would have wiped out one of their Immortal armies. And even more importantly...he had even killed the True Immortal commander! They thought that the deceased True Immortal was to blame for his carelessness; they had no idea that Ji Ning, upon seeing Evergreen turn traitor, had known that the situation was grim and so had finally unleashed his full power.

The power of Ning's Heaven Punisher had instantly increased several times over.

If the nine-headed lion, the 'Great Sage Who Devours the Skies', was to once more fight head-on against Ning...he would lose even more disastrously than last time.

"Kill!" The Three-Eyed Demon charged towards Ning.

"Block it."

"Tie it down."

The True Immortals and Raindragons were all going all-out.

Ning knew that he had no time to continue his slaughter of the fleeing Immortals. He immediately turned and charged straight towards the Three-Eyed Demon. While charging forward, Ning launched a kick towards a nearby Zhuyan Ape. BOOM! The Zhuyan Ape was not only knocked flying, it also blew apart in midair.

"Die."

Chains...black dragons...golden light...snow flowers...vines...tendrils...strange runes...all sorts of spells and magic treasures landed on the body of the Three-Eyed Demon.

However, Three-Eyed Demon's aura wasn't diminished in the slightest. It completely ignored the spells and magic treasures, focusing only on Ji Ning.

"Kill Evergreen."

"Kill this traitor."

"Kill him!"

The other Raindragons and Heaven Punishers had gone berserk as well. In fact, they ignored their own safety as they launched all-out assaults of their own.

Sword Immortal Evergreen had taken advantage of the earlier opening to lead the Seamless Gate army in wiping out a Raindragon, two Pangu War-Formations, and six Heaven Punishers. After the situation turned dangerous, he had immediately begun to flee towards the Three-Eyed Demon.

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Although Ning and the others were going all-out in their efforts...the Three-Eyed Demon simply held too enormous of an advantage. The Seamless Gate had also sent out other Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and armies as well. After Sword Immortal Evergreen had caused heavy casualties, more forces of the Seamless Gate had been freed up to assist the Three-Eyed Demon..

"The Seamless Gate is definitely going to win this battle."

As Sword Immortal Evergreen flew towards the Three-Eyed Demon, he actually said aloud, "You should all join our Seamless Gate. You'll be able to survive if you do."

"Vile traitor, I swear I'll kill you!" The Xia Emperor's eyes were completely bloodshot.

"Despicable creature."

"Foul thing!"

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Crimsonbright Realm were all enraged. They had been stabbed in the back at a critical moment by one of their 'allies'; how could they not be angry? And their dearly beloved junior apprentice-sister Snowdance had also been killed as well!

BOOM!

Ning's Heaven Punisher, the mightiest one of them all, finally clashed with the Three-Eyed Demon for the first time.

BANG!

Ning had been very cautious, choosing to use shields...but he was still knocked flying backwards.

"The difference in strength is too great." Ning instantly realized this as he flew backwards. "The stories were true; the Three-Eyed Demon's power has already reached the Daofather level."

The three Diremonster Gods already possessed tremendous, overwhelming power. The Three-Eyed Demon they joined together to form had a qualitatively superior level of strength; it had reached the Daofather threshold. Perhaps Eastbreak, by relying on Daofruit of primordial chaos, was able to unleash arrows that were comparable or even slightly superior in strength...but the Three-Eyed Demon still definitely had a Daofather's power. Ning was far from being a match for it.

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"Hurry up and kill Ji Ning." Atop the distant walls of the Seamless City, Daofather Ink Bamboo was sending a mental order to the three Diremonster Gods. "Ignore all else for now; get rid of Ji Ning!"

.....

"Get rid of Ji Ning." The Godking's voice rang out within the minds of the three Diremonster Gods as well.

.....

"Don't worry." The Three-Eyed Demon, filled with a terrifying unearthly aura, was staring at Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher with all three of its eyes, watching as it was sent flying backwards. The Three-Eyed Demon bounded forward with large steps, ignoring all spells and magic treasures. Its charge simply couldn't be stopped! Right now, the Three-Eyed Demon had only a single goal...to kill Ji Ning!

.....

The underwater estate.

The calm Empyrean God Redsnow. The child-like Empyrean God Primalfire, whose eyes flashed with savage light. Empyrean God Snow Scorpion. Empyrean God Dovesnake. Empyrean God Ninefangs. Empyrean God Sunblaze. Empyrean God Darkmoon.

The six of them were watching the battle outside. The giant yellow bear, through his attunement to the scenes happening outside the estate, was revealing images of the battle in midair.

They saw the Three-Eyed Demon take form.

They also saw how Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher was instantly knocked flying by the Three-Eyed Demon.

"Those three little brats of Mount Dragoneater...back then, they were nothing more than jokes. But now, they've become this powerful?" A desire for battle could be seen in Empyrean God Redsnow's eyes.

"We've disappeared for far, far too long. Naturally, some powerful figures will have emerged...but the Three Realms have nearly forgotten how formidable our Starseizing Manor was." The bald old man, Empyrean God Ninefangs, narrowed his eyes, a cold light

flashing within them.

As for the nearby fur-clad Ji Ning, he bowed respectfully and said, "I'd like to ask you, seven seniors, to please assist."

Chapter 38 – Redsnow's Name

As soon as Ji Ning spoke out, all seven of the Empyrean Gods, along with the giant yellow bear, simultaneously turned to look towards him.

“You really want us to act?” The lovely Empyrean God Snow Scorpion sent urgently to him.

“Don’t regret it.” The child-like Empyrean God Primalfire sent mentally as well.

“We’ve only promised to assist you once,” the bald Empyrean God Ninefangs looked at Ning as well.

Empyrean God Dovesnake, Empyrean God Sunblaze, Empyrean God Darkmoon, and even the giant yellow bear sent urgent mental queries as well. The reason why they sent mental messages was because the battle outside had reached a fever pitch; they had to communicate in the shortest amount of time possible.

Only Empyrean God Redsnow remained silent. He just looked at Ning, who looked back at him. Their gazes met...and their was no hesitation in either of their eyes.

“Assemble the formation.” This was the only thing Empyrean God Redsnow said.

“Ahahaha...”

The other six Empyrean Gods couldn’t help but begin to laugh. Blazing eagerness appeared within their eyes. They had been in seclusion for far, far too long. Although they had been peaceful for countless years, they remained as hot-blooded as ever, and had always been looking forward to the day when they could once more enjoy a blood-soaked battle. The Realmwar for the Crimsonbright Realm...this was exactly what they were hungering for.

Instantly, there was an explosion of light within the underwater estate as a rainbow of colors appeared...

.....

The outside world.

The battlefield where Ji Ning, the Xia Emperor, and the Three-Eyed Demon were located. The battle here between the two sides had truly reached a fever pitch, with the heart of the battle centering around the Three-Eyed Demon.

The Three-Eyed Demon served as the leader for the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, White-Faced Flood Dragons, Bifang Cranes, Zhuyan Apes, and golems of the Seamless Gate.

On the Crimsonbright Realm's side, the Heaven Punishers, Raindragons, Pangu War-Formations, Empyrean Gods, and True Immortals were struggling to hold on. Alas...they were at a clear disadvantage.

Sword Immortal Evergreen had broken the balance between the two sides, and the Three-Eyed Demon had just made things worse for the Crimsonbright Realm. Most importantly of all...even Daofather Crimsonbright had painfully given up on their region for the sake of the bigger picture. Ji Ning's side was now in extremely dire straits. Fortunately, Ji Ning, the Xia Emperor, and some of the other powerful figures on their side were still able to fight back for now.

"Die, all of you. Just die. What's the point of struggling?" The Three-Eyed Demon was acting with wanton brashness. At this moment, the Three-Eyed Demon was brandishing two giant warhammers in his hands, smashing them down in every direction. This was the weapon of choice, because the Three-Eyed Demon was being commanded by the nine-headed lion, the 'Great Sage Who Swallows the Skies', who was especially skilled in using giant warhammers.

Whoosh!

A Raindragon that was being assaulted by the forces of the Seamless Gate was knocked flying towards the direction of the Three-Eyed Demon.

Seeing this, the Three-Eyed Demon immediately leapt forward, smashing down the giant warhammer in his hands.

"No!"

"Watch out!"

Although the Raindragon tried to dodge, and although the Xia Emperor and the others wanted to assist...it was too late.

BOOM!!!

A giant warhammer smashed directly on the body of the Raindragon. With a boom, the body blasted apart, revealing the many Immortals inside of it, as well as a terrified, silver-haired Empyrean God who immediately began to flee.

"Fleeing?" The incomparably savage Three-Eyed Giant once more smashed down with his giant warhammer, sending it towards the silver-haired Empyrean God in a vicious blow. Fortunately, the Empyrean God hurriedly split his body in half and began to flee in two different directions. Although one of his bodies was destroyed, the other one managed to escape, allowing him to avoid catastrophe. Despite this, half of his divine power was instantly used up.

"The Three-Eyed Demon has definitely reached the Daofather level of power. I couldn't block him, no matter how hard I tried," the silver-haired Empyrean God frantically warned the others mentally while flying away. After moving a good distance away, he cast a few spells and used some magical treasures, then began to battle against the other White-Faced Flood Dragons, no longer daring to fight against the Three-Eyed Demon head-on again.

The only ones who did dare to fight the Three-Eyed Demon head-on were Ji Ning, as well as the Raindragons, Pangu War-Formations, and

Heaven Punishers that were commanded by Empyrean Gods and True Immortals. So long as they weren't caught offguard, and as long as there was at least two or three of them, they were capable of blocking the blows of the Three-Eyed Demon.

Boom!

Ning was once more knocked flying backwards.

During that short period of time, he had already clashed three times against the Three-Eyed Demon. Each time, he had been completely suppressed; if the Three-Eyed Fiendgod had been given just an extra breath's worth of time, Ning probably would've been killed.

Fortunately, many of his allies were helping him, giving him a chance to recover.

"They're coming." As Ning flew backwards, a hint of joy actually appeared on his face.

Whoosh!

Directly behind Ji Ning, a towering Empyrean God appeared out of nowhere, dressed in a rainbow-colored armor and wielding a longspear that was thirty thousand meters long. The face of this Empyrean God was fairly handsome; it was the face of Empyrean God Redsnow.

"An Empyrean God?"

"A Fiendgod?"

"Where'd he come from?"

As Ning flew backwards, the Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate who had come to try and pin him down were badly shocked. However, moments later, they dismissed the new threat. "Who cares which Fiendgod this is? Just kill him! If he appeared out of nowhere, he had to have come out from a dimensional treasure. He's just here to provide a bit of help."

They weren't really to blame for the fact that they couldn't tell how powerful the Seven Planets Empyrean God was. Empyrean God Redsnow and the rest of the seven worked together absolutely perfectly, and they had completely retracted their auras of power. In addition, this type of Empyrean God formation was different from the Heaven Punisher Formation; the Heaven Punisher Formation drew out the natural energy of Heaven and Earth, resulting in tremendous power that was hard to control. This type of Empyrean God formation, however, pooled together the divine power of the multiple Empyrean Gods who participated in it, using it to form a physical body that, from the surface, looked absolutely identical to a real body.

"Attack."

"Kill!"

"Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher is very hard to deal with; most likely, only the Three-Eyed Demon can kill him. Let's get rid of this new Fiendgod instead."

"Right. Get rid of him first."

The Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate knew very well that in a fight, it was better to sever a single finger than to damage ten. Thus, quite a few combatants of the Seamless Gate chose to temporarily 'spare' Ji Ning, instead focusing their attacks on the Seven Planets Empyrean God.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God stared at them coldly in a manner reminiscent of Empyrean God Redsnow. However, the longspear in its hands swung out in a simple sweeping motion.

Whoosh...

It completed a full circle around.

The thirty thousand meter longspear instantly caused snow to begin to drift down in the surrounding area, with time itself beginning to

turn chaotic.

"What's going on?" A Zhuyan Ape was just about to charge forward, but it suddenly felt an incredibly sick feeling, one generated after suffering from temporal distortion. He felt as though his movements were alternately between speeding up and slowing down dramatically. This sort of temporal distortion made it want to vomit blood.

Boom...

It felt trapped within a nightmare. Before it could wake up...a longspear smashed directly onto its body. BOOM! Its body instantly blew apart. The Immortals within it began to flee in terror, but the drifting flakes of snow instantly froze them solid. Aside from a very small number who managed to hide into their Immortal estates, the rest all perished.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

That simple sweeping motion by the longspear resulted in the destruction of a total of four White-Faced Flood Dragons, two Zhuyan Apes, and three Empyrean God golems in the surrounding area. Even the incredibly resilient golems had been completely destroyed.

One of the four White-Faced Flood Dragons had been commanded by an Empyrean God!

"White snow drifting about...a longspear...can it be him?" The fleeing Empyrean God revealed a look of terror. "If it's the Seven Planets Empyrean God...I'm finished..."

He instantly split his body into seven parts, beginning to flee in multiple directions.

Swish swish swish swish swish swish!

Light reflected off the longspear, creating seven flowery streaks of spear-light that wiped out all seven of the clones of the fleeing

Empyrean God. If the Three-Eyed Demon could be described as focusing on 'overwhelming' and 'crushing' its foes, then the Seven Planets Empyrean God commanded by Redsnow focused on 'accuracy' and 'precision'. His spear-arts were simply perfect. The field of temporal distortion only lasted an instant, but to the enemies trapped within, it felt like an eternity.

In truth, the fleeing Empyrean God already knew that he was doomed. If he divided into too many bodies, each body would be extremely weak; most likely, even the snowflakes would be capable of destroying him. However, if he didn't create enough bodies, then he probably wouldn't be able to dodge the spear. Thus, he chose to split into seven and give it a try...but he failed.

And so, he died.

"Ahahaha. How long has it been? Our Seven Planets Empyrean God of the Starseizing Manor has once more appeared in the world!"

"Wonderful, wonderful! Darkmoon, it's been a long time since we brothers have fought together like this."

"Kill, kill, kill! Kill them until their blood flows like a river. Fight until the heavens collapse and the earth caves!"

"Hmph. Kill them all!"

All seven Empyrean Gods were filled with a desire to do battle.

While the other six Empyrean Gods called out in delight, the controller of the Seven Planets Empyrean God, Redsnow, sent it charging forward with full power as he displayed the full power of the terrifying spear-arts he had spent countless eras perfecting. It must be understood that when the Seven Planets Empyrean God had battled against the three Queen Mothers, those three had created bodies from an enormous amount of energy, with each body having reached the Daofather level. When faced with the Seven Planets Empyrean God, however, they were still injured. The only issue was

that their bodies had no weak spots at all, allowing them to automatically recover from any wounds!

Boom! The longspear swept sideways.

Slash! It stabbed forward.

Bang! It smashed downwards.

The longspear moved like a roving dragon. Wherever the Seven Planets Empyrean God moved past, it left devastation in its wake. It actually slaughtered its foes even faster than the Three-Eyed Demon. Clearly, its unfathomable, ghostlike spear-arts were even harder to defend against than the overwhelmingly powerful warhammers.

.....

Atop the city walls of the Seamless City.

Daofather Ink Bamboo had a hint of a smile on his face as he watched the entire battlefield.

"Ink Bamboo, it seems we are going to win."

"Yes. The stage is already set; Crimsonbright shouldn't have any cards left to play that can change the course of events. You really are formidable; you were actually able to place a chess piece like Sword Immortal Evergreen by Crimsonbright's side."

"Haha...that was-" The Godking's voice suddenly halted, but not before a hint of shock and rage appeared within it.

Daofather Ink Bamboo and the Godking were conversing through space through usage of coresense. Right now, they both revealed looks of astonishment...because they saw the Seven Planets Empyrean God suddenly appear out of nowhere. When it began to massacre their soldiers, when its longspear began to lay waste to the many Fiendgods and Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate, and especially when it slew an Empyrean God...all doubts were erased

from their minds.

"White snow drifting about...hair as crimson as blood...can it really be...?"

.....

"The three of you, be careful. That's the number one wargod of the Starseizing Manor, Empyrean God Redsnow. He's dressed in that rainbow armor; this is very likely the former 'Seven Planets Empyrean God' of the Starseizing Manor, with Redsnow as the commander." Daofather Ink Bamboo immediately sent a mental message to the three. He had never personally seen Empyrean God Redsnow before, but as a Daofather, he had long ago seen reports which included Redsnow's appearance.

On the battlefield.

The Three-Eyed Demon had been engaging in a wild slaughter. Upon hearing this message, they took a look at what was happening...and saw the Seven Planets Empyrean God, which was slaughtering its foes even faster than the Three-Eyed Demon had been.

"The number one wargod of the Starseizing Manor? White snow drifting about, hair crimson as blood...Empyrean God Redsnow, who roamed about during the Primordial Era?" The nine-headed lion was shocked, while the gold-feathered eagle and the broken-horned dragon felt stunned as well.

They had lived through the Primordial Era.

Back then, however, they weren't very well known. When they had styled themselves as the Great Sages, they had actually been mocked. Back then, however, Empyrean God Redsnow had been an even greater legend than the Seven Great Diremonster Sages. He was a peerless god of war who had been famous long ago, back when the humans had begun to fight with the Fiendgods for control of the world.

Of the Empyrean God spearwielders of the Primordial Era, there were two who were exceptionally famous and exceptionally powerful. The first was the most powerful wargod of the Celestial Court, Yang Jian ¹. The second was the ancient Empyrean God Redsnow, who had followed the True God of Primordial Chaos, Daoist Threelives.

In the Primordial Era, the difference between them and Empyrean God Redsnow was simply unfathomable.

Now, however...the three of them stood at the very pinnacle of power amongst Empyrean Gods.

"So what if it's him? So what if he was strong back then? We're not the weaklings we used to be."

"Right. I refuse to believe that we can't beat those seven cowardly mice who have been hiding all this time. The Starseizing Manor? It might've been famous in the Primordial Era, but that was countless years ago."

"Elder brother, second brother, let's attack."

"Attack!"

The Three-Eyed Demon didn't show any fear at all as it charged forward.

"This is..."

"What a powerful Empyrean God. Where did he come from? Is he here to help our Crimsonbright Realm?"

"He's too powerful."

"White snow drifting about...a longspear...? Can this be the number one wargod of the Starseizing Manor of the Primordial Era...?"

"Is that Redsnow?"

"It's the Seven Planets Empyrean God, with Redsnow as the commander!"

"Redsnow."

"Right, that's Empyrean God Redsnow!"

The forces of the Crimsonbright Realm also noticed this terrifying Fiendgod, filled with an unearthly, murderous aura and possessed of a power that had reached the Daofather level. There were quite a few Empyrean Gods and True Immortals who had been alive during the Primordial Era, and so they had heard of the legends of Empyrean God Redsnow. Some had even seen him in person. For example...the Xia Emperor himself.

"However, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater possess unstoppable might as well. They stand at the very pinnacle of power amongst Empyrean Gods, and the Three-Eyed Demon they've joined together to form has reached the Daofather level of power. Can the Seven Planets Empyrean God which Redsnow is commanding defeat the Three-Eyed Demon?"

"It'll be dangerous."

The Crimsonbright Realm's forces were slightly nervous as well.

"DIE!" Bellowing loudly, the Three-Eyed Demon charged forward towards the Seven Planets Empyrean God with two warhammers at the ready, each step causing a minor earthquake. It no longer paid any attention to Ji Ning; its full focus was on the Seven Planets Empyrean God before it. The Three-Eyed Demon had only one thought in its mind...to completely wipe out this target!

Redsnow?

Hmph, naught but an old bastard who had been hiding like a coward for countless years.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The Seven Planets Empyrean God charged

towards the Three-Eyed Demon as well, sending the longspear in its hands to sweep forward. It was like pushing through tall grass; the Fiendgods and Terrorbeasts of the Seamless Gate that were unable to dodge in time all exploded. Not even the armies commanded by Empyrean Gods and True Immortals dared to move close to the Seven Planets Empyrean God.

The two of them instantly closed the gap.

In this moment...

Almost everyone on the entire battlefield was focused on their location. Even the divine archer Eastbreak, who had only two Daofruits of primordial chaos left due to his frantic arrow storm assault, was focused on this location. Even the Daofathers on both sides were watching this fight nervously. The Seven Planets Empyrean God...the Three-Eyed Demon...if one of them was defeated, a lethally effective blow would have been dealt to their respective sides.

"Die! Go die! I'm the strongest, now!" The Three-Eyed Demon struck like a giant windmill, hammering down with its two mighty warhammers. The warhammers even carried spatial ripples with them, a sensation of absolute massiveness and weight. It felt as though two unfathomably large continents were smashing towards the Seven Planets Empyrean God.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God didn't use its marvelous, intricate spear-arts. Instead...it took the blow head-on.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God took a two-handed grip over the longspear. Focusing its strength around its waist, it suddenly unleashed its full power. Time itself seemed to twist as countless snowflakes suddenly began to manifest atop the longspear, forming an utterly enormous and snow-white silhouette.

BOOM!

A collision that seemed to cause the heavens themselves to collapse.

The snow-white longspear silhouette swept sideways against the great warhammer. Although it trembled slightly, it still twisted and struck against the body of the Three-Eyed Demon. The Three-Eyed Demon only had enough time to place a warhammer in a blocking position before its chest, but was still struck so hard that it was knocked off of its feet and sent flying backwards.

Also known as Erlang Shen, who once helped to defeat and capture Sun Wukong. ↵

Chapter 39 – Redsnow the Invincible

“Die.”

The eyes of the Seven Planets Empyrean God flashed with cold light as it thrust the longspear in its hands forward. Swoosh! The longspear struck out like lightning, and around it swirled an almost ripple-like pattern of spatial distortions, with the tip of the spear gleaming with light. No one would doubt how astonishing the power of this spear was. The Three-Eyed Demon had just been knocked flying, but it didn’t have any time to feel rage or embarrassment. It immediately leapt backwards, causing the space around it to seemingly blur as it used an evasive technique. Its movements were very orderly, and it swept the two warhammers forward to strike at the attacking spear.

“Third brother, Redsnow’s not that special. There’s seven of them but just three of us; it only makes sense that their Seven Planets Empyrean God is slightly more powerful than our Three-Eyed Demon.”

“Right. We’re a bit weaker in terms of the strength of our divine body, but in a real battle, we can still kill them.”

The golden-feathered eagle and the broken-horned dragon sent mental messages to each other.

“Don’t worry. There are no Empyrean Gods who can defeat me.” Flames of rage were blazing within the nine-headed lion’s heart.

He was an extremely proud person.

Although he was ranked third amongst the three brothers, and although he was normally very low-key...his ambitions were far greater than the ambitions of the other two. His actions in his youth, his roaming of the Primordial World, and even his decision to call himself the Great Sage Who Swallows the Skies...all of these were due to his tremendous ambition. His greatest desire was to grow

more powerful...and he had indeed become incomparably mighty.

"You were born before me; in fact, you were born when the universe was first established! You were also a follower of a True God of Primordial Chaos. However...no matter how good your luck was, I can still defeat you." The nine-headed lion had entered a completely berserk state. "Today, during this Realmwar which is being watched by countless Daofathers...I am going to take your life, Empyrean God Redsnow, and use it to prove how mighty I am!"

"Die!"

The great warhammers in the Three-Eyed Demon's hands no longer were swung with mere brute force; instead, they began to carry a strange, rippling force with them.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God remained icily calm as it stabbed forward with its longspear.

Clang! Boom! Clash!

The sounds of the longspear slamming against the warhammer suddenly became rather odd.

"Mm?"

The Seven Planets Empyrean God was actually unable to overcome the Three-Eyed Demon for a time.

"During the Primordial Era, this little fellow wasn't very famous. He seems rather similar to that old bull, however...and he's even a bit more sinister than the old bull." Empyrean God Redsnow had tremendous experience; he immediately understood what the nine-headed lion's battle strategy was. He also immediately understood what the best way to defeat the Three-Eyed Demon was.

At the beginning, both the Seven Planets Empyrean God and the Three-Eyed Demon had all relied on using tremendous physical power.

Now, however, the spear-arts of the Seven Planets Empyrean God suddenly changed.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Drifting, unpredictable spear-light began to appear in the air as the longspear seemed to have transformed into an agile serpent, striking about with no apparent pattern.

The Three-Eyed Demon swung about its twin warhammers with tremendous force. Although they still contained that strange, powerful rippling attribute, the Seven Planets Empyrean God's longspear seemed to be empty and void-like; the ripples of the twin warhammers were completely unable to affect it.

"What sort of devilish spear-art is this?" The nine-headed lion was enraged.

"Calm down, third brother. During the Primordial Era, Empyrean God RedSnow was especially famous for his fusion of the Grand Dao of Time and the Grand Dao of Snow, which he applied in his battle strategies. Given that he had mastered the Grand Dao of Snow, he must certainly have a high level of insight into the Heavenly Dao of Water. Look at his spear-arts; they flow like water in an unbreaking stream, surrounding by temporal fluctuations. You need to be steadier," the golden-feathered eagle sent mentally. The eldest brother and the second brother were quite formidable as well, and they had been alive for longer than their third brother had been. They were quite observant as well.

"I started to use a Qiankun-based hammer-art, so he began to use this devilish spear-art. When I slow down and fight more stably, he goes berserk on me." The nine-headed lion was impatient as well.

His previously arcane hammer-arts suddenly became as stable and as weighty as a mountain, with each blow of his warhammer containing incomparably massive force.

Boom.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God used all sorts of techniques, be it ferocious chops, lashing blows, or vicious slashes. The Three-Eyed Demon was forced to retreat repeatedly, having been forced into a losing position.

"Daofather, we can't hold this area much longer." The nine-headed lion finally began to grow truly frantic. He truly felt stifled during this battle. Although he possessed tremendous power, his Three-Eyed Demon was innately weaker than the Seven Planets Empyrean God. His supreme battle technique had been completely suppressed as well! Redsnow's spear-arts were simply unfathomably mysterious and profound.

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Ji Ning continued to fight, wielding Ananda World-Swords that were many thousands of meters long in each hand. Sword-light flashed about him as the Fiendgods and Terrorbeast about him fell.

"Kill!"

"Die!"

The Xia Emperor and his five allies on his ship of light were casting their spells and using their magic treasures as they wildly assaulted the Seamless Gate.

The other Raindragons, Heaven Punishers, and Pangu-War Formations were assaulting the Seamless Gate's forces as well.

It must be understood that prior to this, all of these forces had been focusing on the Three-Eyed Demon. Now that the Seven Planets Empyrean God was beating the Three-Eyed Demon backwards, Ji Ning and the others who had been dealing with the Demon were suddenly freed up. They could begin to launch unobstructed assaults against the nearby Fiendgods, Terrorbeasts, Empyrean Gods, and True Immortals of the Seamless Gate. All of a sudden, the Crimsonbright Realm held an absolute advantage in this battle

region!

"Evergreen, don't flee!"

"Evergreen, die!"

The Xia Emperor and the others were still utterly furious.

"Hmph." As soon as Sword Immortal Evergreen saw the Seven Planets Empyrean God emerge, he had a bad feeling. He had immediately begun to flee and only launch spells and magic treasures from a great distance. Whenever the Xia Emperor and the others drew near him, Evergreen would immediately retreat once more. If he retreated any further, he would have left this battlefield region and entered another one.

The Xia Emperor and the others understood...killing Evergreen was important, but winning this battle was more important. Thus, they temporarily gave up their attempt to kill Evergreen, instead turning their energy to slaughtering the other forces of the Seamless Gate.

.....

Atop the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Daofather Crimsonbright's face turned completely ruddy from excitement, and his lips were parted in a huge grin. "Redsnow! Ahahaha, it's been forever since I've seen him! His power seems to have improved a bit compared to before. Is that the Seven Planets Empyrean God of Threelives? With the seven of them...we have a chance to win this war."

"Alas...we're out of chaos Daofruits." Daofather Crimsonbright glanced towards the distant divine archer, Eastbreak.

Eastbreak had shot out a total of sixteen arrows, and he had used up almost all of his heartforce as well as his eight chaos Daofruits. Although he had only destroyed around thirty-plus White-Faced Flood Dragons, Bifang Cranes, and other Terrorbeasts, he had tactically chosen his targets from across the entire field of battle. As

a result, the Seamless Gate actually lost nearly a hundred Terrorbeasts in total! However, they still had far, far too many Empyrean God golems.

"Eastbreak is out of arrows."

"Counter-attack!"

"Attack!"

The morale of the Seamless Gate's forces, previously at a disadvantage, instantly surged as they began a wild counter-attack. When they had launched their all-out attack, they had produced many Empyrean God golems. Although Eastbreak had caused them to lose a portion of their forces, their remaining combat power was no lower than the combat power of the Crimsonbright Realm.

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Daofather Ink Bamboo's face was ashen. A perfectly superb situation had suddenly ended up like this!

Based on his previous predictions, once Eastbreak ran out of arrows, the other battlefield regions would return to a stalemate, while the Three-Eyed Demon would be able to completely dominate Ji Ning and the Xia Emperor in their region. The Three-Eyed Demon would then lead the Seamless Gate's forces to reinforce the other battle regions, breaking through the forces of the Crimsonbright Realm and crushing them until their entire line of battle collapsed.

When that happened...they would have won this war.

Even if Daofather Crimsonbright immediately ordered his forces to retreat, the Seamless Gate would have still dealt the Crimsonbright Realm a devastating blow.

But...

"Redsnow? This 'Redsnow' character is actually this powerful?"

Daofather Ink Bamboo had an ugly look on his face. Gritting his teeth, he sent mentally, "The eighteen of you are to go reinforce the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater right away!"

"Yes."

"Yes."

Eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Seamless Gate who were scattered throughout the battlefield heard and immediately acknowledged the order.

Daofather Ink Bamboo watched coldly as eighteen of his Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were began to move. This resulted in the situation in multiple other battle regions becoming dangerous for the Seamless Gate, but Daofather Ink Bamboo had picked quite carefully; the battle wouldn't be lost as a result. The Seamless Gate still had many Empyrean God golems, after all, and killing them was very difficult.

"The combined power of eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, as well as the Three-Eyed Demon...I refuse to believe they aren't enough to suppress the Seven Planets Empyrean God."

"After defeating you, the Three-Eyed Demon will then lead the eighteen to sweep through and lay waste to the other battle regions." Daofather Ink Bamboo's eyes were filled with ice.

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The battle region where Ning was located.

"Senior Redsnow, be careful." Ning immediately noticed the streaks of light flying towards them from far away. There were a total of eighteen streaks of light, each of which represented an Empyrean God or a True Immortal. He couldn't help but feel shocked and sent a mental message to Redsnow.

"Eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals."

"They actually sent eighteen."

On the Crimsonbright Realm's side. Ji Ning, the Xia Emperor, and the others were immediately shocked...and then their eyes turned red with bloodlust. "Kill, kill, kill! The more we kill, the easier it will be to deal with the others."

"Die for me." A sharp awl appeared atop Ning's right fist. He launched three heavy, vicious attacks towards the head of an Empyrean God golem. Boom! Boom! Boom! The three lightning-fast punches caused the Empyrean God golem to completely collapse.

"Get in here!" The Xia Emperor and the others cast multiple spells, completely binding an Empyrean God golem then sealing it away within a treasure.

Ning and the others were frantically trying to whittle away the Seamless Gate's combat power, so that they could go and assist the Seven Planets Empyrean God.

"Attack Redsnow."

"Annihilate that Seven Planets Empyrean God."

"Assemble into formation."

The eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals flying in the air began to launch their attacks. The eighteen of them quickly divided into three groups. Nine of the True Immortals joined together to form a formation, the 'Nine Precious Godtowers Formation'. Three of the Empyrean Gods joined together to form a second staff-wielding Three-Eyed Demon. The six remaining Empyrean Gods and True Immortals focused on casting spells and using magic treasures to slow down and bind the Seven Planets Empyrean God.

"Just in time." The original Three-Eyed God, who had been beaten so badly it had been considering fleeing, finally let out a sigh of relief. Then, invigorated, he turned to launch a counter-attack.

"Kill!" The staff-wielding Three-Eyed God bounded forward as well.

"Descend!" The eyes of the nine True Immortals were filled with madness. They pointed into the distance, and instantly a pagoda that glowed with golden light began to descend from the heavens, moving to swallow the Seven Planets Empyrean God within its depths.

"Go."

"Bind!"

The six remaining Empyrean Gods and True Immortals began to cast spells as well.

Ning and the others wanted to move to assist, but Redsnow's voice suddenly rang out, shaking the entire battlefield. "Don't worry about me. Wipe out the other members of the Seamless Gate."

His longspear flashed like lightning. "BREAK!"

Spacetime itself trembled.

Boom!

The golden pagoda of light that was descending towards the Seven Planets Empyrean God was actually pierced apart by a single spear-strike. It ignored the binding spells, sending its longspear out in dragon-like strikes that caused spacetime itself to twist. Boom! Boom! The unfathomable longspear seemed to somehow simultaneously strike both of the Three-Eyed Gods at once. The one wielding the longstaff was instantly knocked far away, while the one led by the nine-headed lion staggered back multiple steps as well.

Eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, combined with the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater...were actually being completely suppressed!

"What?!" Daofather Ink Bamboo was watching from far away, and his

face instantly turned extremely ugly to behold.

“Good!”

“Formidable.”

“Excellent!” All the Crimsonbright Realm’s forces, spread throughout the battlefield, began to roar in jubilation.

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In a completely different world. Mount Innerheart..

Patriarch Subhuti was seated in the lotus position. Next to him sat a wizened old man who held a fan in his hands; Subhuti’s second disciple, ‘Crazy Ji’. The two of them were both watching this Realmwar.

“Spacetime?” Crazy Ji called out in surprise.

Subhuti’s eyes lit up as he revealed a smile. “This red-haired kid has actually managed to merge the Grand Dao of Space and the Grand Dao of Time into one. He’s begin to truly touch upon the power of spacetime.”

“Congratulations, Master, for having found another with such talent,” Crazy Ji said immediately.

Chapter 40 – Allfiend World

“Don’t overstate things. This red-haired kid has just touched upon spacetime; he can be considered to have just barely gained a basic level of insight into it.” Subhuti sighed. “Still...I’ve finally found a suitable successor to the supreme skills I developed, just as the great tribulation has arrived. It seems the heavens have taken pity on me.”

Crazy Ji nodded as well.

All of Subhuti’s disciples believed that their second brother, Crazy Ji, had become the true heir and successor to their master’s skills. This wasn’t wrong; Crazy Ji had learned all of Subhuti’s Buddhist techniques and Daoist techniques, as well as even the [Dream of the Three Realms]. Naturally, Crazy Ji had long ago reached the Daofather level, and was ranked as the highest authority amongst the countless Arhats of the Buddhist Sangha.

Crazy Ji himself knew very well, however, that the true supreme technique of his master, Patriarch Subhuti...was a supreme spacetime technique.

The reason why Subhuti was able to be so mysterious was precisely because his mastery over spacetime was absolutely astonishing. Other Daofathers couldn’t even locate his ‘Crescent’ major world, thanks to his utterly amazing control over spacetime.

“Master has finally found a successor for his supreme technique. It seems as though the heavens are on our side,” Crazy Ji said.

“The heavens?”

Subhuti raised his head to glance towards the skies. “The Seamless Gate’s ‘king’ ended up merging himself into the Dao of the Heavens. My Crescent world is governed by the Dao of the Heavens as well. The other Daofathers might not be able to find it, but the Seamless Gate’s ‘king’...he might not have been able to find it before fusing

with the Dao of the Heavens, but now, by relying on the Dao of the Heavens, he can. This means that the living creatures on this world will not be able to escape this storm either."

"You are worrying too much, master. That 'king'...in the end, he's still just a part of the Dao of the Heavens, now. He cannot simply act as he wishes," Crazy Ji said.

"Yes...and so we have a chance to win." Subhuti nodded.

Empyrean God RedSnow wasn't the only one in the Three Realms to have gained a basic level of skill in spacetime; two other Daofathers had as well. They were members of the Nuwa Alliance, but these two Daofathers had their own paths to follow; there was no way they would divide their attention to focus solely on the path of spacetime. After all, there were many paths of training in the Dao, with the most powerful one still being the path of primordial chaos.

The two who had completed that path were Pangu and Nuwa.

.....

The Grand Xia. Whitepole Commandery. The battlefield of the Realmwar.

"Diel!"

The Seven Planets Empyrean God brandished its longspear, causing spacetime to fluctuate and change as white snow drifted down. It hammered down upon the forces of the Seamless Gate, including the group of Empyrean Gods/True Immortals and the three Diremonster Gods, to the point where they found it hard to even withstand its blows.

"Too powerful. Empyrean God RedSnow is too powerful."

"He has no weaknesses at all. His group combat skills and his solo combat skills...all of them are perfect and flawless. No matter how well we coordinate with each other, we still have some flaws and

openings. We're going to lose for sure."

"We simply can't stop him."

The three Diremonster Gods, the Immortals of the Nine Precious Godtowers Formation, and the others all felt completely despair and powerlessness.

"His Dao of combat is completely flawless. It's as though he was born to fight this sort of war." The eldest brother of the three, the gold-feathered eagle, let out a shocked sigh.

"Don't forget that he was born when Heaven and Earth was first created. He experienced the very earliest wars of the universe. Large-scale battles like this...he's been through countless numberse of them, and his battle style was honed, tempered, and perfected countless times through those countless battles. In the end, we simply didn't have the chance to experience that era. We haven't experienced enough of these large-scale battles. Although our third brother is comparable to Empyrean God Redsnow in terms of the Dao, in a real life-and-death battle, especially one on a battlefield like this...he's still a bit inferior. Now that Empyrean God Redsnow is commanding the Seven Planets Empyrean God...the Three-Eyed Demon which our third brother is commanding is naturally going to be weaker."

"Third brother, let's retreat. We can't stop him."

"Right. Let's retreat. Let's reflect on what we've learned, then fight him again in the future."

"Fine." The nine-headed lion nodded.

"Let's go!"

The Three-Eyed Demon sent a mental message that echoed in the minds of all allies present.

Whoosh!

Instantly, the many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals that had been battling the Seven Planets Empyrean God immediately began to retreat!

"Attack! Don't let them escape!"

"Attack!"

Ji Ning, the Xia Emperor, and the other Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, Heaven Punishers, Raindragons, and Pangu War-Formations instantly began a frenzied pursuit upon seeing this.

The most dazzling figure of all was that of the Seven Planets Empyrean God!

His longspear...it was a life-taking instrument of death. Even the Three-Eyed Demons had fled rather than face it; naturally, there was now nothing and no one capable of stopping it at all. Within this battle region, the Seamless Gate's forces quickly began to collapse.

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The walls of the Seamless City. Daofather Ink Bamboo was watching over the entire battlefield here. Upon seeing that the eighteen Empyrean Gods and True Immortals he had sent out were still unable to stop the Seven Planets Empyrean God, he knew that this battle was over! As he expected...just a short while later, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater began to lead the others in a frantic retreat.

"Withdraw!" Daofather Ink Bamboo had a dark look on his face. He said just that single word, his voice echoing throughout the entire battlefield.

The forces of the Seamless Gate in every single region on the battlefield were in difficult situations. Upon hearing the order be given, they all let out sighs of relief and began to flee.

"This Empyrean God Redsnow..." Daofather Ink Bamboo stared at the

Seven Planets Empyrean God, an ugly look on his face. He knew that there was a limit to the amount of energy it could unleash; the reason why it had been so incredibly powerful was because of the person commanding it. The reason why the Three-Eyed Demon was so powerful as to have reached the Daofather level was because its commander, the nine-headed lion, had an extremely high level of insight into the Dao. The Seven Planets Empyrean God was even more powerful, precisely because its commander, Empyrean God RedSnow, was simply far too formidable.

RedSnow...

In terms of his insights into the Dao, he was actually roughly on par with the nine-headed lion. He had far too many combat techniques, however, resulting in the nine-headed lion feeling complete despair.

"Press the attack!"

"Don't let them run off!"

"Kill them!"

The forces of the Crimsonbright Realm immediately began to chase after and slaughter their foes.

The Seamless Gate's entire battle line began to collapse as they began to flee. The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, the six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian, and the other powerful Empyrean Gods were now all fleeing as well. When faced with such an awe-inspiring enemy army...if they let themselves be trapped, they would be doomed.

This sort of large-scale disorderly retreat actually resulted in incredibly heavy casualties. The forces of the Seamless Gate had lost all their desire to fight; the only thing they wanted to do was flee.

The battle right now was a slaughter!

Daofather Ink Bamboo watched silently, not saying a single thing as

he saw it all unfold. He had been forced to give the order to withdraw; if he had tried to insist on continuing this battle, even more of his forces would be wiped out. If he didn't order a retreat right away, he might lose the majority of his forces. The difference in power between the two sides wasn't that great right now; the losses they were sustaining were acceptable, if painful.

Daofather Ink Bamboo looked towards the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, where Daofather Crimsonbright was.

Daofather Crimsonbright had a smile on his face. A wide smile.

"Hmph." Daofather Ink Bamboo turned and left the city walls.

.....

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Everyone was cheering in celebration. The countless Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals were incomparably jubilant right now. This had been a simply wonderful battle! That final pursuit in particular...the enemies they managed to catch and trap had all been utterly massacred. The sensation of being able to massacre their foes...it was glorious!

"Redsnow."

The countless Immortals all looked towards a group of Empyrean Gods who were standing in midair. The most dazzling figure was a red-haired Empyrean God...Redsnow!

All of the Immortals and Fiendgods present knew that the person who had changed the entire outcome of this battle was Empyrean God Redsnow. As a result, they all looked towards him with scorching, excited gazes. He was too strong. He was the most powerful Empyrean God they had ever seen, and the way he had used his spear...it was simply unbelievable.

"Fellow Daoist Redsnow, long time no see."

"Fellow Daoist Redsnow, you saved the day."

"Redsnow, why have you come?"

Some of those who had met Empyrean God Redsnow before, such as the Xia Emperor and a few other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, were chatting with him.

"Primelight." The Xia Emperor was particularly animated when chatting with the foster son of Daoist Threelives, Empyrean God Primelight. They two actually had quite a good relationship in the past.

A short time later, the entire Eight Dragons Cloudcity began a massive celebratory banquet, with the countless Immortals and Fiendgods celebrating together. In the main palace, Daofather Crimsonbright personally feted the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and Celestial Immortal commanders who had risked their lives in battle.

Halfway through the banquet...

"Redsnow." Daofather Crimsonbright sent a mental message over.

"Daofather." Empyrean God Redsnow replied mentally as well.

"Your sudden appearance...why is it that I haven't heard of any Daofathers arranging you to come here?" Daofather Crimsonbright asked.

"We promised Ji Ning to help him once," Empyrean God Redsnow replied. "After having helped him this time, we've finished our assignment."

"Ah?"

Daofather Crimsonbright was surprised that it was Ji Ning who had caused them to come. Immediately afterward, he grew rather worried. He immediately sent over, "You are only helping out once? You won't be helping out after this?"

Empyrean God Redsnow nodded gently.

Daofather Crimsonbright sent urgently, "The Seamless Gate has suffered heavy casualties during this Realmwar. It is very possible that they might retreat, which means the Realmwar will be over. But if they aren't willing to accept this outcome and attack again...without the seven of you standing against the Three-Eyed Demon, we might not be able to win." He knew exactly how important the Seven Planets Empyrean God was, and how much of an impact it had on the battlefield.

"Last time, you helped Ji Ning. This time, help me," Daofather Crimsonbright sent mentally. "I'm not insisting that you join me in battle, but if the Seamless Gate refuses to give up and assaults us once again, I'd like you to assist our Crimsonbright Realm."

Empyrean God Redsnow hesitated momentarily, then began to confer mentally with the nearby Primelight, Dovesnake, Snow Scorpion, and the others.

A Daofather was asking them to help out...

In addition, Daofather Crimsonbright had indeed been on very good terms with Daoist Threelives. Ji Ning was participating in this war as well. Soon, they came to an accord.

"Since you have made the request, Daofather, the seven of us shall do as you ask. If the Seamless Gate once more comes in force, we shall continue battle, only stopping once this Realmwar is completed," Empyrean God Redsnow sent mentally.

Daofather Crimsonbright instantly let out a sigh of relief.

Wonderful.

These seven Empyrean Gods had been the most elite of generals under Threelives. It was true that Threelives' death had resulted in the disbanding of his forces, with quite a few of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Starseizing Manor leaving for other pastures. Only Redsnow and the rest of the seven had been

unwilling to leave due to the loyalty and devotion they felt towards Threelives. They had continued to hide within the Starseizing Manor and waited...waited for their new leader to arise. Each of the seven were incredibly powerful, and when they joined forces...twenty or thirty ordinary Empyrean Gods or True Immortals wouldn't necessarily be a match for them.

.....

"We lost." Daofather Ink Bamboo knew that there was a limit to how much strength the Seamless Gate could employ. They had reached that limit for the sake of this Realmwar; it was unlikely that further reinforcements would be made available. Even if there were further reinforcements...it'd be hard to make up for difference in power that now existed. The Seven Planets Empyrean God was simply too powerful.

.....

The Three Realms. A mysterious major world.

This major world was known as the Allfiends world. This was the true headquarters of the many Myriad Demons Caves.

There were a hundred Seamless Gates; in turn, there were also a hundred Myriad Demon Caves. They were spread out throughout the Three Realms, frantically collecting precious materials and building golems. The reason why the Seamless Gate was so terrifyingly strong was in large part because their skill in the Dao of Constructs was truly unrivalled in the Three Realms. They were able to produce some truly top-tier golems that the Nuwa Alliance was completely unable to manufacture.

As for how secretive and mysterious the Allfiends world was? Not even the commander of the Seamless Gate, the 'Godking', was qualified to interfere with it.

The Allfiends world was under the protection of an even more

powerful leader of the Seamless Alliance. The entire Nuwa Alliance had been frantically attempting to find a core formation-diagram for the golems, but alas...they weren't able to find diagrams for even the Empyrean God golems, to say nothing of the truly top-class golems.

Rumble...

Within a massive, levitating fortress.

This fortress had been completely sealed off. Inside the sealed fortress, there was an enormous palace that was a hundred thousand kilometers in size. Inside the palace, there was a veritable horde of Celestial Immortals, at least a million of them or more. They were as numerous as ants, scattered throughout the palace as they focused on manufacturing various parts.

At the highest part of the palace, a massive throne was levitating in the air, with two Pure Yang True Immortals standing respectfully before it.

Atop the throne sat a wanton, dissolute-looking man. He slouched against the throne, resting his jaw on his right hand while holding a gourd of wine with his left hand. He stared downwards. "1,800,000 Celestial Immortals. It's been three full years...but they still haven't finished this Daofather golem?"

"It'll be done soon, Grandmaster Blackheaven," the two True Immortals said hurriedly.

The man seated atop the throne was, amazingly, 'Celestial Immortal Blackheaven'.

The two True Immortals knew that Grandmaster Blackheaven usually lived a relaxed, carefree life; all he did these days was order his disciples and grand-disciples around in creating various golems. It was now quite rare for him to personally take control over golem production. He was, after all, the most skilled expert in the Allfiends world in the Dao of Constructs. In fact, even this 'Celestial Immortal

body' of his was actually manufactured through the art of constructs!

Not even True Gods or Daofathers could tell that this body of Blackheaven's was merely a golem-body. Even if the Nuwa Alliance slew it, they would have merely killed a golem-body.

Grandmaster Blackheaven...supposedly, he himself wasn't particularly powerful in combat. His skill in golems, however, was unrivaled in the Three Realms. Even the toys he casually created possessed enormous power, and by relying on these little toys Blackheaven was able to roam the Three Realms with ease. It was hard for even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to deal with him, which was why almost everyone in the Three Realms treated Blackheaven as they would a True Immortal. But none of them knew the truth.

Not even Azurefox or True Immortal Whitepole knew the truth, that Blackheaven was in reality the Seamless Gate's most skilled expert in the art of constructs. His status in this regard was a tightly held secret. Although quite a few Celestial Immortals and True Immortals in the Allfiends world knew, they weren't permitted to leave this place at all.

"Eh?" Celestial Immortal Blackheaven's face sank. Crack! The wine gourd in his hand was crushed into tiny pieces.

"Despite all that, they still weren't able to kill Ji Ning. Empyrean God Redsnow? Empyrean God Redsnow actually appeared out of nowhere and ruined everything. Fortunately...I didn't place all of my hopes on those three Diremonster Gods. In the end, it'll be up to my golems." Blackheaven had an ugly look on his face as he coldly issued an order: "Issue a decree in my name. The Daofather golem must be completedly within one month. The 1,800,000 Celestial Immortals are merely focusing on these parts, whereas I am managing the manufacturing of the Daofather golem as a whole, but it still isn't finished...if it isn't finished within one month, then all Celestial Immortals shall be punished by the seven flames...as will you two!"

Upon hearing the words 'punished by the seven flames', the two True Immortals were horrified. They immediately said respectfully, "Yes, Grandmaster. It will definitely be completed within a month."

Chapter 41 – Birth

“Go. You don’t need to stay here and serve me,” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven instructed.

“Yes.”

The two True Immortals immediately flew downwards, beginning to make the arrangements for countless Celestial Immortals to refocus on the project. The two began to go all-out to manufacture some parts as well.

Blackheaven just looked downwards at them.

“Blackheaven.” Suddenly, a sonorous voice rang out by Blackheaven’s ears.

Blackheaven was startled. He immediately said respectfully, “Master, your powers are all-encompassing.”

“This type of Daofather golem is too weak. They are just barely at the Daofather level. When the Endwar comes, the truly supreme True Gods and Daofathers of the Three Realms, like the leaders of the Daoist Path and Buddhist Way, will be able to annihilate these golems with one blow.” The sonorous voice said calmly, “You shouldn’t divide your attention. Focus on manufacturing the ‘Envoy of All Things’.”

“Master, this is merely one of my avatars,” Blackheaven said respectfully. “And as you said, master, this sort of Daofather golem is just barely at the Daofather level; it’s fairly simple for me to work on it. It’s just two or three years; it won’t have much of an impact on things. All these years, I’ve roamed the Three Realms in a carefree, relaxed manner. That little girl Violetgrass...I did indeed dote on her. She’s dead, now. There’s no way I can let it go without taking revenge for her.”

“Mm. I never would’ve thought you’d feel affection for someone.” The

sonorous voice held a hint of amusement within it. "If that's the case...then go do what you need to do. However, you should know what truly matters and what does not."

"Yes. Once this Daofather golem is completed, I'll immediately send back these 1,080,000 Celestial Immortals and have them continue to work on the Envoy of All Living Things," Blackheaven said respectfully.

The Seamless Alliance only had so many Celestial Immortals, after all. The number of Celestial Immortals who were skilled in the art of golems was even lower. 1,080,000 Celestial Immortals who were skilled in golems...this represented nearly 20% of the total number available. Sending them to work on this Daofather golem did indeed have a negative impact on the advancement of the Envoy of All Things. However, manufacturing that golem was a very arduous, lengthy task; it was true that 'wasting' the time of 20% of their Celestial Immortals for just three years wouldn't make much of a difference.

If that wasn't the case, Blackheaven wouldn't have dared to reallocate these Celestial Immortals.

"It's good that you understand this. We absolutely must win the Endwar. We already lost, once...I don't wish to lose a second time," the sonorous voice said.

"Yes," Blackheaven said respectfully.

The presence departed from his mind. Only now did Blackheaven let out a sigh of relief.

"I have to go see the Godking as well. Otherwise, they might foolishly decide to give up that Realmwar," Blackheaven mused to himself.

.....

The vast world of darkness.

The Godking was seated high up on his towering throne, looking down at the world below him. A figure appeared in the darkness below; it was Celestial Immortal Blackheaven.

"Godking," Blackheaven said.

"Grandmaster." The black-robed Godking had a hint of amusement in his voice. "Why have you come to my place, Grandmaster?"

"I'd like to ask you, Godking, to invite Daofather Ink Bamboo as well," Blackheaven said.

"Fine." The Godking nodded.

Soon, yet another figure appeared within the world of darkness. It was Daofather Ink Bamboo, who glanced towards Blackheaven and said with surprise, "Grandmaster?"

Only the most top-tier figures of the Seamless Alliance knew who Blackheaven really was. It was precisely because of his status that they treated Blackheaven as they would an equal, and in fact were quite courteous to him. First of all...Blackheaven's master was, at present, the most powerful figure of the entire Seamless Alliance...the Lord of All Fiends¹!

In addition, Blackheaven was the most skilled grandmaster the Seamless Alliance had in the Dao of Constructs.

Whether it was his own artistry in golems, or his master being the Lord of All Fiends...Blackheaven had a truly transcendental status.

"I've created a Daofather golem," Blackheaven said.

"Daofather golem?" The Godking frowned. "Those golems use up many precious materials, but are fairly weak. Didn't the Fiendlord give up on them?"

Daofather Ink Bamboo looked towards Blackheaven in puzzlement as well.

These were core members of the Seamless Gate; they knew much about the plans they had to conquer the universe.

The Godking was the leader who commanded the various parties of the Seamless Alliance. But it was the Lord of All Fiends, however, who was the most powerful figure of the Seamless Alliance. It was precisely because the Lord of All Fiends was guarding the Allfiend world that the Nuwa Alliance was completely unable to acquire the core formation-diagrams they so desperately wanted. The most supremely powerful golems were all built within the Allfiend world, and the Lord of All Fiends was reverentially referred to by the Seamless Alliance as the 'Fiendlord'.

The Lord of All Things didn't take part in worldly matters, and so it was left to the Godking to command the Seamless Alliance.

It must be understood that even when the former 'king' of the Seamless Alliance was alive, the Lord of All Fiends was second only to him! After the king had failed to defeat Mother Nuwa, he had been forced to merge his body into the Dao of the Heavens. That way, at least his soul wouldn't be destroyed. The Lord of All Fiends, however, had relied on his own techniques to flee from and escape Nuwa. After so many years having passed, the Lord of All Fiends had only grown even more unfathomably powerful.

Even major powers like the Godking or Daofather Ink Bamboo would be extremely respectful when meeting the Lord of All Fiends.

"Master knows of this, of course," Blackheaven said. "I've created this Daofather golem for the purpose of killing someone."

"Killing someone?"

The Godking and Daofather Ink Bamboo both looked at Blackheaven. The Godking asked, "Ji Ning?"

"Yes. I watched Violetgrass grow up. I absolutely won't allow her to have died for nothing. I'm going to make Ji Ning pay a price." Cold

light flashed in Blackheaven's eyes. "He has to die. I know that you encountered the Seven Planets Empyrean God during this Realmwar. Once my Daofather golem appears, the Seven Planets Empyrean God will definitely be defeated."

"If the Seven Planets Empyrean God is defeated...you should be able to win this battle, yes?" Blackheaven asked.

"If it really is a Daofather golem...then we can win this battle." Daofather Ink Bamboo nodded.

They knew exactly how powerful Daofather golems were. Even some actual Daofathers such as Daofather Ink Bamboo, the weaker ones, would find it very hard to actually do anything to a Daofather golem.. It was much like how many Empyrean Gods found it hard to do anything to an Empyrean God golem; the principle was the same. Daofather golems had bodies comparable to Protocosmic spirit-treasures. They were very hard to damage!

They also possessed enormous, unearthly amounts of power.

Of course, the truly supreme True Gods and Daofathers of the Three Realms could easily destroy these golems. But the Seven Planets Empyrean God?

The Seven Planets Empyrean God was merely created through a formation of seven Empyrean Gods; its attack power was just barely at the Daofather level. Its attacks wouldn't even scratch the body of a Daofather golem. The Daofather golem, however, could launch attacks with impunity. In the entire Crimsonbright Realm...there was nothing and no one that was a match for it. The only option was for many armies to join forces against it.

"This Blackheaven character really is quite the madman. The amount of precious materials needed to forge a Daofather golem is enough to create more than a thousand Pure Yang treasures. We are currently in the process of creating the Envoy of All Things, but he's actually split off so many Immortals and precious materials to

manufacture a Daofather golem? I imagine the Fiendlord can't be too happy about this either." The Godking and Daofather Ink Bamboo both had the same thoughts about this.

"With Blackheaven's Daofather golem joining us...naturally, we would win. But if the Nuwa Alliance ends up sending over the Eight Immortals of the High Caves or similarly powerful Empyrean Gods or True Immortals to assist the Seven Planets Empyrean God...they'd absolutely be able to block the Daofather golem." Daofather Ink Bamboo expressed his concerns.

"If that happens...then forget about the battle. There's only one target; Ji Ning," Blackheaven said.

"If it's just to kill Ji Ning...fine."

"Agreed."

Both the Godking and Daofather Ink Bamboo agreed.

They both knew very well that the Crimsonbright Realm had already summoned a significant amount of their forces for this Realmwar. The Nuwa Alliance had to worry about many different theaters of war as well; it wasn't that likely that they would send some of their supremely powerful forces to take part in the Crimsonbright Realm. If they did, their other regions would be thrown into danger.

Thus...they should be able to win this battle.

"One month. The Daofather golem will be ready in one month. A month from now, go to the Allfiend world and I'll give it to you," Blackheaven said, then disappeared into thin air.

The Godking and Daofather Ink Bamboo exchanged a glance.

"This Realmwar in the Crimsonbright Realm is starting to spin out of our control," the Godking said softly.

"Once the Seven Planets Empyrean God which Daoist Threelives left

behind emerged, the entire battlefield was thrown into a state of frenzied chaos," Daofather Ink Bamboo said. "To be honest...to manufacture a Daofather golem simply for the sake of winning a single Realmwar isn't really worth it."

"Still. We've already paid a very high price...which makes winning this Realmwar all the more important," the Godking said heavily.

.....

Time passed, one day after another.

"What's going on? The Seamless Gate isn't retreating?"

"The Seamless City is still there."

The walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity were often occupied by Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, as well as the Celestial Immortal commanders. They would stare at the distant Seamless City, and indeed....that towering black citadel was still there, not having budged at all.

"They've suffered catastrophic losses, and our Seven Planets Empyrean God is much stronger than their Three-Eyed Demon. Why haven't they retreated?"

"They fled quite quickly last time. If they dare to fight us again, we'll completely wipe them out."

The Crimsonbright Realm's forces had very high morale right now.

In fact, Daofather Crimsonbright often ordered his armies to go out and call for the Seamless Gate's forces to come out and fight, but the Seamless Gate's armies remained inside their city, not budging at all.

.....

Soon, half a month passed after the last major battle.

Within a world of pristine mountains and lovely streams.

This was the vast world within the Pure Yang Treasure, Violetdawn Pearl'. Long ago, Ji Ning had relocated all of the Ji clansmen to this place. Uncle White, Mu Northson, Little Qing, and Autumn Leaf were living here as well. A short time ago, Ning had moved Yu Wei to this place as well. His Primaltwin, however, remained within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, prepared to enter combat at a moment's notice.

Within a quiet courtyard.

Ji Ning, Ji Truekeep, Uncle White, Little Qing, and Mu Northson were all here. Ji Ning was seated on a stool, occasionally glancing towards the closed door of the courtyard residence. His senior apprentice-sister, Yu Wei, was currently within that room along with Autumn Leaf.

"Look at him. He's not saying a thing, and he has a strange little look on his face," Northson snickered.

"He's about to become a father. Of course things are going to be different." The Whitewater Hound lay there to one side as he smiled towards Ning. He felt quite gratified. Ji Ning was finally about to become a father. Finally, he would have a child of his own."

"Ning, son, don't be nervous. Wait patiently. You've been able to wait for several years; it's just a little bit longer," Uncle White said with a laugh.

"Right." Ning nodded.

Yu Wei was a Celestial Immortal; naturally, she would be completely safe in childbirth. But when he thought of how his child was about to enter this world, Ning felt an inexplicable nervousness and uneasiness. Would he be able to take good care of his child? To protect his child?

"Five years, two months in the womb. I wonder what your child will look like, senior apprentice-brother." Northson let out a sigh.

This made Ning even more nervous.

A while later, suddenly...

"Your child greets you, Mother. Uh, where's my father?" A clear, crisp, childish voice rang out from within the room, followed by a surprised cry from Autumn Leaf..

Ning had previously been nervous. Now, he was simply stunned.

This is a different person from the 'Lord of All Things' mentioned as being deceased just few chapters ago. ↵

Chapter 42 – Daughter, Brightmoon

“Don’t be in such a rush! Get dressed before you go out!” Yu Wei’s voice could be heard within the room.

“The clothes we prepared...were too small...” Autumn Leaf’s worried voice rang out as well.

Boom!

The door to the residence was blasted open, and a butt-naked child with tousled hair came flying straight out of it. Ji Ning immediately saw that this child was a little girl. Her skin was so soft and tender, it seemed as though water was about to come out of it. Her eyes were filled with lively intelligence, and she actually had the divine tattoo of a flame in the middle of her forehead.

The area around the little girl was surrounded by flames, as though she was a young fire elemental.

BOOM! The little girl first happily flew out, then gave the wooden door yet another kick, causing it to completely splinter apart. She revealed a look of delight, then turned and swept Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Ji Truekeep, and the Whitewater Hound with her gaze. She said in a clear, crisp voice, “You guys...which one of you is my father?”

Ning, Northson, Uncle White, and the others all stared in amazement.

A long moment passed before they were able to recover.

“Good...heavens.” Northson blinked several times. “This...this is a newborn?”

“According to the legends, the children of Immortals and Fiendgods are quite incredible. This is my first time seeing one. This is too...” Truekeep was somewhat dazed as well.

"So this is the child of my son Ning and Yu Wei?" Uncle White was rather dazed as well. "My son Ning is such an obedient child, while Yu Wei is kind and virtuous. How is it that they've given birth to a little girl like this..."

Thanks to his formidable Dao-heart, Ning was the first one to go back to normal. Laughing, he said, "You can't just run around butt-naked like that. You have to wear clothes in the outside world; otherwise, you'll be laughed at. Uh...you are the size of a three year old child. They didn't exactly prepare the appropriately sized clothes for you... but ordinary clothes can't withstand the flames that you are born with control over."

Ning pointed towards her. Whoosh! Strands of fire and strands of water began to twist around her body, quickly forming an adorable-looking water-colored undergarment.

"So you are my father?" The girl-child stared at Ning.

Ning felt a very satisfied feeling in his heart as the girl stared at him. The main reason was that this daughter of his was simply too adorable. The heavens must have absolutely doted on her, to have blessed her with such cleverness and cuteness.

"Yes." Ning smiled and nodded.

"He's your father." Yu Wei and Autumn Leaf walked out from the residence. The looks on their faces were absolutely priceless. The look on Yu Wei's face was particularly complicated. Clearly, the fact that the child was so big, could speak, could run around, and control fire...wasn't exactly what she had expected. Although it was said that the children of Immortals and Fiendgods would be rather special, most would still be ordinary infants when first born.

"When I was in Mother's belly, I could hear people chatting outside. I know that my father is named Ji Ning. Is your name Ji Ning?" The girl-child nibbled on her fingers as she stared at Ning.

"Right. I am Ji Ning." Ji Ning nodded.

"Your child greets you, Father." With a thudding sound, the girl immediately fell to both knees, kowtowing towards him.

"Father. Mother." The girl looked at Ji Ning and Yu Wei. Quite excitedly, she asked, "Have you picked a name for me yet?"

Ning and Yu Wei exchanged a glance. This daughter really wasn't what they had expected...but neither Ning nor Yu Wei were ordinary figures either. Ning laughed. "Senior apprentice-sister, you said that you would pick out a name."

Yu Wei nodded gently. "Since our child is a daughter...let's call her Brightmoon."

"Brightmoon?" Ning was startled.

That year...

Ning had shocked everyone during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. It was within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Riverse that he and Yu Wei had grown close and become Dao-companions.

"From today forth, you shall be named Ji Brightmoon." Ning looked at the flame-wreathed girl.

"Ji Brightmoon? Ji Brightmoon? Haha...Ji Brightmoon, Ji Brightmoon..." The girl happily ran around the courtyard, calling her name out repeatedly in excitement.

The nearby Little Qing drew close to Ning. In a low voice, she whispered, "Master, why is it that your daughter seems to be even more energetic and wilder than a boy? She was just born, but she's already this crazy...I can't even imagine what she'll be like in the future."

Ning laughed and nodded. "Yes, in the future, I'll have to teach and guide her properly."

.....

His daughter, Brightmoon, truly possessed tremendous innate talent. From the moment of her birth, she possessed a Zifu-level Fiendgod body, and was able to control the power of fire. This was actually quite normal; even the weakest of Fiendgods that were born from the natural world were at least at the Xiantian level of power, while the most powerful ones that were born forth from the primordial chaos were the Empyrean Gods and True Gods of Primordial Chaos!

The nine children of the Ancestor Dragon, for example, were all born at the Empyrean God level.

In the Primordial Era, it was quite common for Immortals and Fiendgods to have children. The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan, Youngflame Freak, for example, was born from the couple of a Youngflame clan member and a Fiendgod, which was why he was so ugly. Many Godbeasts, in turn, were created during the Primordial Era when powerful Fiendgods couple with certain Diremonsters. Their monstrous bodies contained Fiendgod blood in them, and so they were referred to as 'Godbeasts'; the more pure their bloodline was, the more powerful they would be.

Ji Ning and Yu Wei were both humans, and so their child was naturally a human as well.

Since Ji Ning's bloodline was a bit weaker, his daughter was 'merely' born with a Zifu-level Fiendgod body. However, she had no skills as a Ki Refiner at all. In this regard, she would have to train from scratch.

Any and every Fiendgod, even the most supreme of True Gods of Primordial Chaos, would have to train from scratch if they wished to become Ki Refiners. Daofather Crimsonbright, Patriarch Subhuti, and the other True Gods of Primordial Chaos had to slowly train as Ki Refiners as well, eventually reaching the Daofather of the Great Firmament level.

"Father, Father! Piggyback, piggyback!"

"Father's the best!"

Ning carried his daughter on his back, wandering Brightheart Island. Although it had been moved to the Violetdawn Pearl's world, it hadn't changed all that much.

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"Father, Fiendgod Body Refining is so boring. Let's train in ki instead!"

"Brightmoon, do you want a taste of your mother's crop?"

"Bad Father! You are so bad!"

.....

When facing his adorable daughter, Ning simply couldn't put on a show of being the 'strict father', no matter how he tried. Yu Wei, however, was hard-hearted enough to carry a riding crop around with her. Whenever her daughter was disobedient, she would use the crop to teach her daughter a lesson and spank her. This caused Brightmoon to be rather nervous around her. In front of Ning, she would be playful and silly, but in front of Yu Wei, she would be respectful and extremely obedient.

"Honestly, you don't have to be so strict with her." Ning had discussed this matter with Yu Wei in private before. "Our daughter is still young. You can tell how talented she is. She's like a scroll of white parchment right now, waiting to be filled up. We have to teach her patiently. There's no rush."

"We are in the middle of a great tribulation, right now. We can't just slack off." Yu Wei shook her head.

.....

"Demonstrate the [Sixteen Stances of the Firecloud Sword] which your father taught you." Yu Wei held a willow branch in her hands. Although this was just an ordinary willow branch, there was a layer

of Celestial Immortal energy protecting it. When Yu Wei grew angry, she'd grab Brightmoon and then whack Brightmoon on her little bottom with it until Brightmoon began to howl.

As a Celestial Immortal, it was easy for her to control her power so that the spanking hurt but didn't cause her any actual damage.

"Yes." Brightmoon's eyes were slightly red. She bit her little lips, as though she was about to start crying.

"Eh?" Yu Wei frowned.

Terrified, Brightmoon immediately picked up a sword and began to train in sword-arts. This was a sword-art technique which Ning had created; it was perfectly suited for someone who needed to build up a solid foundation. The sixteen stances were divided into two parts, the first part 'hard' and the other part 'soft'. Both parts, however, fully encompassed the Dao of the Inferno.

Ning stood off to one side, beaming merrily as he watched. Brightmoon gave Ning a sad look, secretly mumbling to herself, "Bad Father! Both of you are bullying me."

"Her potential truly is exceptional. She's only trained for three days, but she's already broken through to the Xiantian level as a Ki Refiner." Ning sighed with feeling. "And from the many sword-arts that I've taught her, it seems as though her talent in fire is particularly high, far higher than in metal, wood, water, or earth. Senior apprentice-sister was referred to as the 'Rainbowflame Fairy', but she was quite talented in water as well. I myself am talented in all five of the Five Elements. Why, then, is this daughter of mine so very different?"

Of the five elements, her talent in the other four elements could be considered as ordinary for a cultivator. Her talent in fire, however, was at an absolutely monstrous level.

Still, Ji Ning and Yu Wei didn't think about it too much. Both of them

were very talented. Yu Wei had become a Celestial Immortal; how could she not be? As for Ji Ning, his Primaltwin had become a Pure Yang True Immortal! Thus, for his daughter to be so incredibly talented in the element of fire wasn't that surprising.

.....

Rumble...

A series of thundering sounds rang out unabated as dark clouds covered the earth. The Eight Dragons Cloudcity and the Seamless City, these two massive cities, remained in their original positions, levitating high in the sky.

"Ink Bamboo." A thought-strand suddenly reached out from across the Void.

"Crimsonbright." Another thought-strand replied.

"Your Seamless Gate really is quite lavish. You actually created a Daofather golem for this Realmwar. Is it worth it? Even if you win, and even if you take over the entire Crimsonbright Realm...in the future, we'll still counter-attack and take it back." Daofather Crimsonbright's thought-strand was filled with absolute furious.

"Oh? Your Nuwa Alliance intelligence reports are quite timely" Daofather Ink Bamboo replied. He had just received the Daofather golem moments ago. Who would've thought that the Nuwa Alliance would find out right away?

There had been nothing Daofather Ink Bamboo could do. If it wasn't for the fact that they held absolute advantages over the Nuwa Alliance in terms of intelligence and the Dao of Constructs, they wouldn't be a match for the Nuwa Alliance at all. The Nuwa Alliance had controlled the Three Realms ever since the Primordial Era, after all! The Daoist Path, the Buddhist Sangha, and even the Primordial Imperial Clan...all of them belonged to the Nuwa Alliance.

In the Nuwa Alliance, experts were as common as the clouds, and

they had quite a few top-tier major powers as well. The three most powerful emperors of the Primordial Imperial Clan...the two leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Sangha...some True Gods who had been born from the Primordial Chaos...

Thus, the Nuwa Alliance had formidable tools available to them as well.

In terms of intelligence, they were only inferior because they couldn't match the Seamless Gate's 'king', who had become one with the Dao of the Heavens itself. However, 1,080,000 Celestial Immortals had been dispatched to work on the creation of the Daofather golem, and an enormous amount of resources had been diverted. This was a huge affair, and the Nuwa Alliance had learned of it long ago. Although they weren't able to break their way into the Allfiend world, they had never ceased their infiltration attempts or their surveillance.

"Ink Bamboo, you should know that although this Realmwar is important, the struggle for karmic luck has just begun. You are acting rather excessively in your attempts to conquer my Crimsonbright Realm." Daofather Crimsonbright was extremely dissatisfied.

The Three Realms were incredibly vast. Up till now, there had only been a few Realmwar, and the struggle for karmic luck had just started. For them to start using Daofather golems right away meant that if the Nuwa Alliance wished to win, they would have to use enormous amounts of resources as well. If this was how the game was going to be played each time...even Daofathers and True Gods would feel heartache at the cost. The cost would be utterly ruinous, be more than what either side could endure.

The Three Realms only had so many treasures in them, after all, and the Seamless Gate only had so many manufacturing materials. This was why Blackheaven's Daofather golem project had resulted in the Lord of All Fiends having made a personal inquiry. The only reason why the Lord of All Fiends didn't pursue the matter any further was

because of Blackheaven's special status.

"This time, our Seamless Gate is definitely going to win," Daofather Ink Bamboo said. "Since you know we have a Daofather golem...you should spend some time thinking about how you are going to deal with it."

Chapter 43 – Sieging the City

Within the Seamless City.

“Daofather.” Sixty-one Empyrean Gods and True Immortals all called out respectfully in unison. As for the others? They had all died in that great clash when the Seven Planets Empyrean God had appeared. The Seamless Gate had suffered heavy casualties during that battle; if it hadn’t been for Grandmaster Blackheaven intervening, the Godking and Daofather Ink Bamboo probably would have chosen to give up the fight for the Grand Xia.

“Our losses in this Realmwar were very heavy.” Daofather Ink Bamboo stared downwards at his forces. “However...our Seamless Gate isn’t giving up this Realmwar.”

“Not giving up?”

The sixty-one Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all surprised. The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater in particular stared intently at Daofather Ink Bamboo. The three of them had truly been beaten so badly by Redsnow’s Seven Planets Empyrean God that they didn’t have any of their usual bravado remaining.

“Daofather, dare I ask...how are we to deal with the Seven Planets Empyrean God?” The eldest of the three Diremonster Gods, the Great Sage Who Swallows the Mountains, called out in a loud voice.

“Look.” Daofather Ink Bamboo waved his hand.

Whoosh.

An enormous creature suddenly appeared out of nowhere into the air above the palace. It was a red-gold color, dazzling to behold. It had a body similar to that of a spider’s, with a total of eight slender and knife-sharp legs. It crouched there in the air, emanating an aura that caused the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals below to feel

shocked.

"A Daofather golem?!" A series of shocked cries rang out.

Daofather Ink Bamboo nodded. "It is indeed a Daofather golem."

"I need to pick one of you to be the controller of this Daofather golem," Daofather Ink Bamboo said.

The sixty-one Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all stunned for a moment...and then they grew wildly excited. Even the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater were rather eager. They all knew exactly how powerful a Daofather golem was, how tough its body was. Not even True Gods or Daofathers would find it easy to destroy it. It possessed the strength of a Daofather and was nearly indestructible.

The might of a Daofather golem was definitely above that of the Three-Eyed Demon.

"These are spoils of war which we gained from vanquished members of the Crimsonbright Realms; 'Splitters'." Daofather Ink Bamboo willed the 'Splitter' to transform into the appearance of the Daofather golem. "Each of you shall take control over a Splitter that has been transformed into the form of a Daofather golem. Use the eight legs to launch your attacks."

"Spar against each other," Daofather Ink Bamboo ordered. "The victor shall control the real Daofather golem."

"Yes!" The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all extremely excited.

.....

They began to spar internally against each other. Soon, the more formidable ones were clearly evident, such as True Immortal Whitepole, Sword Immortal Evergreen, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, the Elder Fairy of the Nine Cloudmist Fairies...

and then they began to compete against each other as well.

The most dazzling performances were actually rendered by Sword Immortal Evergreen and the nine-headed lion.

In the end, after a long and hard struggle, Sword Immortal Evergreen was actually able to just barely achieve victory over the nine-headed lion.

“Great Sage Who Swallows the Skies, the eight slender legs of this Daofather golem are like eight Immortal swords. I am a Sword Immortal, and specialize in the ‘Eight Trigrams Demonslayer Sword Formation’ that was created by Human Emperor Fuxi. I’m perfectly suited for controlling this Daofather golem, which is why I was able to fight against you for so long and just barely win,” Sword Immortal Evergreen said with a smile. “You, Great Sage, are an Empyrean God; you are best suited for close combat, and so were at a disadvantage when competing with me in this manner. I won, but I was lucky to win.”

Evergreen had a very modest attitude right now. He knew very well when he could afford to be arrogant, and when he had to lower his head.

The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater clearly weren’t people he could afford to offend. Even if he ended up controlling the Daofather golem, that was only in service to the Seamless Gate. The Daofather golem belonged to the Seamless Gate; it hadn’t been gifted to him.

“Hmph.” The nine-headed lion had an ugly look on his face. He had actually lost.

Sword Immortal Evergreen’s face flickered slightly, then quickly returned to normal. In his heart, however, he mused to himself, “It’s rare for me to be so courteous, but he actually gives me no face at all. Once I become a Daofather, you’ll be kneeling before me like an obedient puppy.”

"Evergreen, you shall have temporary control over this Daofather golem," Daofather Ink Bamboo said.

"Evergreen shall not let you down, Daofather." Sword Immortal Evergreen was extremely respectful, but his voice was filled with complete confidence.

.....

Dark clouds covered the skies, and a savage wind howled through the land. Drops of rain could be seen within the clouds.

The vast army of the Seamless Gate, however, was filled with an utterly indomitable aura. The energy of the natural world flooded through them in a tidalwave, causing even the Golden Crow in the skies to appear distorted. The dark clouds in the skies rammed into each other, causing lightning to crash down chaotically, as though they too were terrified of the Immortal army below it.

"Crimsonbright, come out and fight!"

The grand army was calling for their foes to come out and engage them. They were within just a few thousand kilometers of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, and the sound of their cries filled the heavens themselves.

.....

"They actually dare to call us out?"

"They didn't dare to come out earlier, but now they do?"

"Hmph, it seems as though the Seamless Gate feels that they haven't lost enough men yet."

"Let's teach them a good lesson."

Instantly, the Eight Dragons Cloudcity became filled with eager cries. The Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and army commanders all flew

towards the main palace.

Within the main palace. Daofather Crimsonbright was already seated upon his throne.

Ji Ning and the others entered, their eyes filled with an eagerness to do battle; clearly, they wanted to go out and fight right away.

"You are not to engage." A hint of worry could be seen on Daofather Crimsonbright's face as he spoke in a low voice.

"Eh?"

Everyone was stunned. Not to engage?

"Dare I ask, Daofather...why not?" Empyrean God Redsnow asked.

"The Seamless Gate feels a very, very strong desire to take over the Crimsonbright Realm. They've actually manufactured a Daofather golem for that purpose." Daofather Crimsonbright shook his head. "Sending you out right now is tantamount to sending you to your deaths."

"Daofather golem?" Empyrean Gods Redsnow, Primelight, Snow Scorpion, and the others revealed puzzled looks.

The seven of them had been staying in seclusion on the Starseizer major world for far too long. They knew very little about the outside world.

"Daofather golem?" The Xia Emperor and the others, however, cried out in shock.

Ning was puzzled as well. He didn't know what this golem was either.

"You should have already seen Empyrean God golems," Daofather Crimsonbright said. "I trust you are fully aware of how hard they are to deal with."

"Yes. They've just barely reached the Empyrean God level in terms of

power, but they are incredibly tough. It is very hard for ordinary True Immortals or Empyrean Gods to damage them." Empyrean God Redsnow nodded.

"Daofather golems have just barely reached the Daofather level of power. They possess enormous power, and are also incredibly tough. Even I am unable to destroy one." Daofather Crimsonbright sighed. "There's no way whatsoever for the rest of you to damage it, while it can damage you. Redsnow...we would probably need a second Seven Planets Empyrean God of equal power to yours in order to tie down that Daofather golem. Otherwise...you by yourselves will be completely dominated to the point of not being able to fight back."

Everyone present now understood. Their hearts turned icy cold.

For them to have gained the assistance of one Seven Planets Empyrean God was already a stroke of tremendous luck. A second one? How likely was that?

A single Daofather golem was much more powerful than the Seven Planets Empyrean God and Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher combined. There was simply no way to fight such a thing. It must be understood that the enemy also had a Three-Eyed Demon, which was only slightly weaker than the Seven Planets Empyrean God. If they were to truly fight...it really would be a lopsided battle.

.....

The mood within the main hall was quite depressing. Everyone felt resentful and unwilling to accept this.

Rumble...

Suddenly, a ripple began to spread out.

Ning and the others couldn't help but look upwards. Through the gates to the main palace, they saw that in the distant skies above them, a tear in the heavens could be seen. Through that tear, out walked a handsome youth who had a red dot in the center of his

forehead. The handsome youth was dressed in Daoist robes, and he gracefully flew towards the main palace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"Cloudust greets you, Daofather," the youth said with a smile as he bowed.

Daofather Crimsonbright's eyes lit up.

"On orders of Human Emperor Shennong, I have come here to assist you in winning this battle, Daofather." The robed youth smiled confidently as he spoke.

Chapter 44 – The Moment Finally Arrives

“Human Emperor Shennong?”

The Immortals and Fiendgods nearby, Ji Ning included, were shocked. Nuwa was the creator of mankind, and mankind had quickly multiplied. During the Primordial Era, however, mankind was still a very weak race amongst a myriad of races. However, the puny race had given birth to three dazzling, brilliant figures. They were Suiren, Fuxi, and Shennong.

Under their command, mankind rapidly and steadily began to grow more powerful, rising to prominence amongst the races. Mother Nuwa herself cared deeply about the three of them, and their accomplishments caused the entire Three Realms to feel stunned.

The most powerful figures of the Nuwa Alliance were, without a doubt, the leader of the Buddhist Sangha and the leader of the Daoist Path.

The three Human Emperors, however, were comparable to these two mighty leaders!

The likes of Old Man Yuan and Patriarch Subhuti were ranked below them. But of course, that didn’t mean that Old Man Yuan and Patriarch Subhuti were necessarily weaker than them. After all, after countless ages of training, they might’ve made breakthroughs that allowed them to reach brand new levels of power. Without actually engaging in battle, it’d be hard to say...

But from the power that the three Human Emperors had already displayed, there was no question about their might at all.

It was precisely because the three of them existed that mankind became the masters of the Three Realms!

Although the Primordial Imperial Clan had successive generations of emperors, only the three of them were truly acknowledged as

sovereigns by the entire Three Realms. Even major powers had to bow their heads in their presence. There was nothing for it; the Three Emperors were simply too strong.

"Shennong, one of the Three Emperors...he's actually made his move. He is someone who is a true ruler of the Three Realms." Ning secretly sighed in amazement. "I wonder...now that one of the Three Emperors has made a move, what sort of a move will it be?"

.....

Upon hearing the youth before him say that he came on the orders of Human Emperor Shennong, Daofather Crimsonbright was delighted. He deeply trusted and tremendously respected Shennong...but he couldn't help but ask in puzzlement, "Does the Human Emperor know what dire straits my Crimsonbright Realm is in? Daofather Ink Bamboo's army now includes a Daofather golem within it."

"The Human Emperor already knows," the youth said.

"Can we win?" Daofather Crimsonbright grew excited.

Both sides had truly fought viciously in this war. Daofather Crimsonbright truly wished to win as well.

"I'm confident we can." The youth nodded. "However, we still need to plan things out carefully, and I need to speak to you in private, Daofather. I have to keep this private and away from the other Immortals and Fiendgods for now."

Daofather Crimsonbright nodded. Sweeping his soldiers with his gaze, he laughed. "You can leave for now."

"Yes, Daofather."

Ji Ning and the others all assented respectfully, then departed.

.....

Outside the main palace. The Immortals and Fiendgods were all chatting animatedly.

"Shennong has actually intervened. He's one of the Three Emperors of Mankind!"

"We're definitely going to win."

"I wonder what sort of method Shennong is going to employ against that Daofather golem." Everyone was discussing this matter, and everyone was eager to know the answer.

Ning was walking by the side with Redsnow and the rest of the seven.

"Senior Redsnow, do you think we can win?" Ning asked.

"We should...but nothing is guaranteed," Redsnow said in a low voice. "Shennong is one of the Three Emperors of Mankind. He's unfathomably more powerful than even Master had been. For him to send people...he must have some degree of confidence. However, our foe is the Seamless Alliance, after all. They have terrifying major powers amongst their ranks as well. You can view it as them competing on a strategic level. It's hard to say who will win and who will lose."

Empyrean God Redsnow knew very well how powerful both sides were, because during that war that ended the Primordial Era...

It was so, so close.

Mother Nuwa had been finished. Their side had suffered countless casualties, and even the likes of Daoist Threelives fell during that final battle. Fortunately, Mother Nuwa made a sudden breakthrough and reached Pangu's level, which was why they had suddenly stormed to victory. Despite that, the 'king' of the Seamless Gate had managed to merge himself into the Dao of the Heavens to preserve his life. As for the Lord of All Fiends, he had managed to escape, preventing Mother Nuwa from being able to kill him.

"For now, let's just watch as the two sides compete strategically with each other," Redsnow said. "For this battle to have reached a state like this...this is crazier than I expected."

Ning nodded slowly.

It was indeed quite crazy. There had already been several Realmwars, but they had all occurred within fairly weak Realms. In truth, the Crimsonbright Realm could also be considered a fairly weak world; after all, Daofather Crimsonbright himself wasn't one of the most powerful figures of the Three Realms. None of the previous Realmwars, however, had reached such a crazy level as the Crimsonbright Realm's Realmwar had.

"All we have to do is wait for our orders. In the midst of this great storm...that's all we can do." Ning thought of his newborn daughter, his incomparably adorable and naughty daughter. A powerful desire to grow strong filled Ning's heart. "I have to become even more powerful. In the midst of this tribulation, only growing in power will allow me to have a chance to protect Brightmoon and senior apprentice-sister..."

What Ning didn't realize...

A major reason why this Realmwar had escalated to this degree was because of him, Ji Ning. First, Old Man Yuan had transmitted to Ning the [Heart Sutra], resulting in his Heaven Punisher gaining such extraordinary strength that even the Godking viewed him as a threat that had to be eliminated as early as possible. And secondly... Celestial Immortal Blackheaven wished to gain revenge for Violetgrass. Ning asking the Seven Planets Empyrean God to help out was yet another new variable that changed this Realmwar yet again.

But of course, if the Seven Planets Empyrean God hadn't appeared, the Crimsonbright Realm would've lost long ago.

.....

The vast world of darkness.

The towering throne levitated in the air at the very center of this world. The Godking sat on his throne, his right hand resting on the throne's armrest and gently tapping on it.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

The sound echoed throughout the entire world.

"Shennong is intervening as well." Lightning flashed through the black eyes of the Godking. "It seems our Seamless Gate has pushed too hard, incurring the wrath of the Three Emperors. They want to use this Realmwar as an opportunity to frighten and shake the Seamless Gate."

"What should I do?"

"What exactly should I do?"

The Godking began to worry.

"True Immortal Clouddust and Daofather Crimsonbright...what exactly are they planning? What is their scheme? Also, Shennong has sent over just one Pure Yang True Immortal...what does he have up his sleeves?" The Godking was extremely worried; these were things which he hadn't been able to find out yet.

"Master."

The Godking raised his head to stare at the dark sky. His voice was very low. "What exactly is Shennong doing? What is the Crimsonbright Realm planning? Please help me..."

The Dao of the Heavens was omnipresent in all places...and nothing within the purview of the Dao of the Heavens could be hidden from the 'king'.

Rumble...

A powerful yet incredibly arcane thought-ripple was sent directly to the Godking.

The Godking was momentarily startled. He instantly revealed a look of delight, then said respectfully, "Thank you, Master."

During the war that destroyed the Primordial Era, their king had suffered extremely serious injuries. Nuwa had been unwilling to let up on her pursuit of him, resulting in him being forced to merge himself into the Dao of the Heavens. Even now, the largest part of the king's consciousness remained asleep. But perhaps because he was part of the Dao of the Heavens, that tiny sliver of consciousness was enough to engage in some degree of communications with the Seamless Gate.

"It seems that if we are to win...our opportunity lies with 'Yu Wei'." The Godking nodded slightly.

He immediately began to summon Yu Wei.

A short while later.

A white-robed woman appeared on the ground within the vast world of darkness. It was indeed Yu Wei. Her aura had changed slightly; she was quite similar to Yuchi Snow, filled with a warm, motherly aura. After arriving, Yu Wei immediately knelt down. "Respectful greetings to you, Godking."

Chapter 45 – Shennong's Medicine

The Godking sat atop his throne, staring downwards towards her. "Yu Wei, how have I treated you?"

"The Godking's benevolence towards Yu Wei has been weightier than a mountain," Yu Wei responded respectfully from her kneeling position. These words sprang from the bottom of her heart. In her previous life, she had turned into a complete demon, had become as berserk as an Asura. It was the Godking who had guided her out from her berserk state and helped her recover from it, regaining her mind and her sanity. If it hadn't been for the Godking, she would've been lost long ago.

It had also been the Godking who had patiently taught them all, one by one. They were all filled with the utmost of veneration towards the Godking, and were all willing to die for him.

Yu Wei was nothing more than one of countless such individuals. When Yu Wei had become apprenticed to Patriarch Lu, her status amongst the countless spies under the control of the Seamless Gate had instantly skyrocketed. The vast majority of the spies were merely at the Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal level, after all. Less than one in ten thousand would be at the Celestial Immortal level, much less have a connection to an important figure like Patriarch Lu.

And now, Yu Wei was connected to not only Patriarch Lu, but also to Ji Ning. She had become the sole chance the Seamless Gate had at reversing their fortunes during this Realmwar.

"It is now time for you to sacrifice yourself," the Godking said.

Yu Wei couldn't help but tremble...then she pressed her forehead to the ground and said respectfully, "Please give me your command, Godking." Every single spy was waiting for the moment where they would be used. Things weren't so bad for the likes of Sword Immortal Evergreen; even after being exposed, he could flee back to the

Seamless Gate. Yu Wei, however, was merely a Celestial Immortal. There was no way she could possibly escape at all. And, to the Seamless Gate, even though Yu Wei was a Celestial Immortal, once her status was exposed she would instantly become much less valuable to them.

"One of the Three Emperors of Mankind, Shennong, has sent True Immortal Cloudsto to the Eight Dragons Cloudcity..." The Godking began to narrate things in order.

Yu Wei listened attentively.

In her heart, Ji Ning and her daughter were who mattered most to her...but the Godking was very important to her as well. This was partially because of gratitude, but was also also because the Godking had left behind his imprint upon her soul. The Godking was capable of influencing her inner heart without her even knowing about it, causing her to trust him even more and make her feel even more indebted to him for his kindness, to the point where she was willing to give up life itself.

Within the Violetdawn Pearl's world.

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, and their daughter Brightmoon were living a blissful life together.

"Kneel!" Ning had a hint of anger on his face.

"Oh."

His daughter Brightmoon meekly fell to her knees, her little mouth trembling as though she was about to cry.

Ning said angrily, "You need to understand the consequences of your actions. Not everyone is an Immortal cultivator. Your mother and I, as well as your Uncle Mu and your Grandpa White are very powerful, and we aren't afraid of the power of your flames. Most of the servants and attendants of Brightheart Island, however, are mortals. To you, you were just using flames to prank them, but to

them, they were just a heartbeat away from death. If I hadn't noticed in time, you would've burned your maid to death!"

Brightmoon didn't dare to say a thing.

Her parents...Ji Ning had always been very gentle, whereas Yu Wei was fairly strict. This time, however...Ji Ning had been truly angered, and his anger had completely stunned and terrified Brightmoon.

Ning couldn't be blamed for his anger. Just two days ago, he had picked a pair of female maids for his daughter. Both were of the same age, roughly eleven or twelve years old. The two had naturally been extremely attentive in taking care of their young mistress, and Brightmoon had liked them very much and had been very happy when playing with them. And then...she started to use her flames to tease and prank the maids, just as she often did with the Whitewater Hound.

That maid had instantly been burned beyond recognition. Fortunately, Ning had reacted very quickly, immediately casting spells on her and providing her with a spirit-pill, allowing her to make a complete recovery.

"I told you how important it was for you to remember that you live in a world of Immortal cultivators. I told you that you can be tremendously dangerous to ordinary commoners. Have you forgotten everything I told you?" Ning roared.

"I...I..." Brightmoon quavered.

"And you are still crying?!" Ning growled, "I want you to stay here on your knees today. You are not allowed to rise until I tell you to."

"Let's go." Ning led Yu Wei away, leaving behind Brightmoon by herself kneeling there pitifully on the ground inside the room.

A while later...

A giant, snowy-white hound padded past.

"Grandpa White!" Brightmoon hurriedly called out.

The snowy-white hound gave her a glance, then continued to pad forward.

After another period of time, an azure-robed woman walked past as well.

"Aunt Qing!" Brightmoon immediately called out.

The azure-robed woman revealed a resigned look on her face as she continued to walk forward.

"Are we being too severe to her?" Yu Wei said worriedly.

"If I don't give her some punishment this time...in the future, she'll cause utter chaos," Ning said angrily. He then looked towards Yu Wei with surprise. Laughing, he said, "Senior apprentice-sister, usually you are even stricter with her than I am. Why are you so soft-hearted today?"

"When I see that sad little look on the kid's face..." Yu Wei shook her head.

Ning said, "She's just acting. She knows very well that whenever she puts that look on her face, we'll feel sorry for her and ease up on her. That's why she's acting this way right now. This time, we really do need to teach her a lesson. She's clearly very talented and innately clever, but she was still born just a short while ago. She's like a blank sheet of paper. She doesn't know the consequences of her actions, doesn't know right from wrong. We have to teach her well."

"Yes, we do. It seems as though you are even better suited to teaching her than me," Yu Wei said.

"No, senior apprentice-sister, you are a better teacher." Ning shook his head. "Mothers are usually more careful and attentive when teaching children."

Yu Wei nodded blankly, not responding.

"What is it?" Ning could sense that something seemed a bit off. This was his Dao-companion, who had been by his side for many years, after all. He could naturally sense that her mood was off.

"Oh." Yu Wei seemed to come back to her senses. Shaking her head, she said, "It's nothing. I'm just thinking about the Realmwar going on outside. Now that my child is born...I'll probably have to take part in the war soon."

Ning was startled for a moment, but then he nodded slowly. "Right. All Celestial Immortals must take part in the war. Prior to this, you were pregnant and temporarily exempted...but now, you'll probably have to participate as well. Still...there's no rush. As long as the Daofather or the Xia Emperor don't say anything, for you to delay a while is a minor matter."

"It's best not to make things difficult for the Xia Emperor," Yu Wei said. "I'll leave behind an incarnation to accompany our daughter. I had best return to the Eight Dragons Cloudcity and prepare to join the war."

"Alright. That works as well. You can stay in my Darknorth army." Ning smiled. "Go to war by my side." Ning would only have peace of mind if she was within his own army.

Yu Wei nodded as well.

Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Yu Wei returned to the residence they previously stayed in.

"Don't be hasty. Right now, both sides are watching and waiting. The Seamless Gate has a Daofather golem, while we should be receiving assistance from Human Emperor Shennong. They should be planning things out now...it isn't time for another battle just yet," Ning said.

"This next battle will most likely be the final, decisive battle that will decide this Realmwar," Yu Wei said with a sigh.

"Yes. Thus, it's very dangerous. Later on, we'll work together in the Heaven Punisher Formation. You'll be right by my side," Ning said. "If anything unexpected happens, I'll still be able to protect you."

Yu Wei looked towards Ning. She could see from Ning's eyes how much he cared about her. This made her emotions only become even more complicated; she felt both warm and miserable.

"Alright." Yu Wei nodded gently.

"Ji Ning, come to my place." Daofather Crimsonbright's voice rang out by Ning's ears.

Ning was startled.

"I'm going to go meet with the Daofather." Ning rose to his feet, then immediately flew outwards. As he left, Yu Wei quietly gazed at his departing figure, as though she didn't want to miss any glimpse of him.

Within the main palace.

Upon entering, Ning realized to his amazement that the only figures within the entire main palace were Daofather Crimsonbright and True Immortal Cloudst.

"Respectful greetings to you, Daofather. Respectful greetings to you, True Immortal," Ning said.

"Sit." Daofather Crimsonbright smiled towards Ning, as did True Immortal Cloudst.

Ning sat down.

Daofather Crimsonbright said, "I've invited you here because I have an important mission to give you."

"Oh?" Ning immediately began to listen attentively.

"This time, Clodust has come on Human Emperor Shennong's orders to bring me two treasures." Daofather Crimsonbright waved his hand, producing two jade bottles, one completely black and the other completely white. Both immediately caught Ning's eye; could it be that the treasures within these two bottles were capable of deciding the fate of this Realmwar?

It must be understood that their foes had a Daofather golem. Were these things even more powerful than Daofather golems?

"Within the black jade bottle is a type of Immortal medicine which Shennong just finished creating, having spent enormous amounts of work on it." Daofather Crimsonbright pointed towards the black bottle. "If you shatter this black bottle, then the medicine within it will quickly spread out and take effect within a field of ten thousand kilometers. All Immortals within the region, including Pure Yang True Immortals, will find their Immortal energy to be completely locked and unusable." ¹

"What?!" Ning called out in shock, "Even True Immortals are affected by this? If they can't use their Immortal energy, won't they be like ordinary mortals?"

"Yes." Daofather Crimsonbright nodded. "This Immortal medicine is newly manufactured. Since the Seamless Gate has never even seen this sort of medicine, they naturally can't manufacture an antidote for it. This concoction does, however, have a major flaw; it doesn't differentiate between friends or foes! Within ten thousand kilometers, all Immortals, friendly or enemy, will be affected by it."

Ning nodded.

This was normal and common for most poisons. Poison wasn't sentient, after all; it couldn't differentiate between friend or foe.

"Thus, the white jade bottle has the antidote within it." Daofather

Crimsonbright pointed towards the white jade bottle.

"When you go back, pour out the medicine into this wine gourd." Daofather Crimsonbright next produced a calabash gourd. "Every single Loose Immortal only needs a single drop. Celestial Immortals need ten, while Pure Yang True Immortals need a hundred. The Darknorth army under your command has three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals. All of them need to drink the medicine."

"When battle begins, the Seamless Gate will definitely continue to try to kill you; they'll send their armies to surround and assault you. When the time comes, just shatter the black jade tablet...and instantly, all Immortals within ten thousand meters will collapse. Since your army will have consumed the medicine in advance, you won't be affected at all...and the only thing you'll have to do is massacre them," Daofather Crimsonbright said with a smile.

Ning was overjoyed upon hearing this. How wonderful! The Seamless Gate currently had an absolute advantage in terms of Immortal power, as their many Empyrean God golems were all controlled by Celestial Immortals.

"Is it useless against Empyrean Gods?" Ning asked.

"The influence on the divine power of Empyrean Gods is negligible." Daofather Crimsonbright nodded.

"Given the Seamless Gate's intelligence capabilities...I imagine that they will soon know that this thing is in my hands."

"This concoction of Shennong's is incredibly valuable. The Emperor of Mankind just recently finished manufacturing it at an extremely high cost. Although we only have a small amount, we have given it to another person as well, in addition to you." Daofather Crimsonbright laughed, "When the time comes, both of your armies are to simultaneously use the medicine. Even though the Seamless Gate knows about it, there's nothing they can do."

"You are very powerful, and the Seamless Gate has a deep urge to kill you. If they surround and assault you, you'll use Shennong's concoction. If they don't surround and assault you, break them down and destroy them one-by-one," Daofather Crimsonbright said. "This is an obvious ploy, but there's nothing they can do about it."

Ning's eyes lit up when he heard this.

They were definitely going to win!

"Don't disappoint me." Daofather Crimsonbright looked towards Ning.

"Don't worry at all, Daofather." Ning was filled with confidence.

Remember, as noted previously in footnotes, in Chinese mythology, Shennong the Divine Farmer is the demigod who taught agriculture and medicine to the Chinese people. ↵

Chapter 46 – No Regrets

Ji Ning reverently accepted the black jade bottle, the white jade bottle, and the calabash gourd!

“You can go now.” Daofather Crimsonbright smiled and nodded.

Ning left the main hall, now in an absolutely wonderful mood. He returned to the Darknorth army camp, going back to his own residence.

“Back so soon?” Yu Wei was there to welcome Ning back.

“Haha...” Ning just couldn’t stop chortling. “Bring me some wine.”

Yu Wei immediately produced a bottle of Immortal nectar. Even as she was just beginning to bring out the winecups and other drinking implements, Ning immediately grabbed the bottle, raised his head up high, then began to guzzle it down happily. He felt a smooth feeling fill his entire body, surging straight to his head. He couldn’t help but exclaim, “How wonderful!”

“It seems you are in quite a good mood, junior apprentice-brother.” Yu Wei sat down next to him.

“How can I not be?” Ning laughed. “I’ll have you by my side on the battlefield, senior apprentice-sister, and we now have a daughter. In addition, we are going to achieve a grand victory in this Realmwar. Everything will be just perfect. The heavens are truly kind to me.”

Yu Wei smiled as well. She reached out with her left hand to take Ning’s hand as well.

Ning laughed again.

“Let me mix up the medicine first.” Ning waved his hand, producing the white jade bottle and a gourd. He pulled the stoppers out from the gourd and the jade bottle. The gourd was a magic treasure

meant for the express purpose of holding wine. It wasn't that precious, merely an Immortal-ranked magic treasure; Daofathers were capable of casually manufacturing such items. A suctioning power appeared within the mouth of the gourd, pulling all of the medicine within the jade bottle into it.

"Mix up the medicine?" Yu Wei was puzzled.

"Right. Later, we'll give this antidote to our three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals to ingest," Ning said with a laugh. "You need to ingest it as well."

"Ingest this antidote? Why?" Yu Wei asked.

Ning said, "Can't you guess? Senior apprentice-sister, Human Emperor Shennong is a master of medicine. In terms of creating Immortal medicines, no one in the entire Three Realms can compare to him. Once this medicine is released, all Immortals within ten thousand kilometers will have their energy completely frozen and unusable. They'll be like ordinary mortals. Tell me...if this is suddenly used on the battlefield, what will happen to the Seamless Gate?"

"It's that amazing?" Yu Wei nodded slowly in amazement. "If that happens, the Seamless Gate will lose disastrously. But junior apprentice-brother...the Seamless Gate supposedly has formidable intelligence networks at their fingers. Can it be that they don't know and aren't prepared?"

"Given their intelligence networks, they probably already know." Ning shook his head. "But this is an open scheme, not a hidden one. If they assault me en masse, I'll release the Immortal medicine and wipe them all out. If they don't...given the power of my Darknorth army, I can break them down one at a time."

Yu Wei nodded gently. "This truly is an open scheme. They know you have the Immortal poison, but without the antidote, there's nothing the Seamless Gate can do."

"The Human Emperor truly is incredible." Ning let out a sigh. "He's actually able to manufacturing such an incredible Immortal medicine as this."

Slosh, slosh.

Ning picked up the wine-gourd and gave it a good shake, listening to the sound of the wine sloshing around within it.

"The medicine's been mixed in." Ning smiled as he looked at Yu Wei. "Want to be the first one to use it?"

"No rush." Yu Wei said with curiosity, "What does this Immortal medicine look like?"

Ning chuckled. "The antidote? It was in this white jade bottle, while the poison is in this black jade bottle." Waving his hand, Ning produced the black jade bottle as well.

"Oh?" Yu Wei reached out for it. "Let me take a look."

Ning was startled. For a brief moment, he wanted to refuse...but it was just a brief moment and a brief thought. He didn't actually refuse or stop her.

"Careful with it, senior apprentice-sister," Ning instructed.

"Of course." Yu Wei held the black jade bottle in her hands.

.....

Within the world of the Violetdawn Pearl.

Yu Wei's incarnation was here, alongside Brightmoon.

"Mother." Her daughter, Brightmoon, continued to kneel there. She stared wide-eyed at Yu Wei. "I know I was wrong. Can you plead with Father on my behalf? Ask him not to be angry with me. I really know I was wrong."

Yu Wei's incarnation walked over to her daughter's side, kneeling down next to her and gently embracing her.

Brightmoon was startled...and then she happily inhaled deeply, smelling of her mother's scent. "Mother, you smell so nice. Brightmoon loves it!"

"Brightmoon..."

"Huh?"

"You need to be a good girl. In the future, don't make your father angry, understood?"

"Oh. I really know that I made a mistake this time!"

"Mm. I know you are a good girl, Brightmoon. The best girl."

Yu Wei's incarnation held Brightmoon in her arms. Suddenly...her tears began to fall.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." Yu Wei's incarnation held Brightmoon in her arms, while the confused Brightmoon raised her head to look at her mother puzzledly. Yu Wei just looked back at her, as though wanting to firmly engrave the memory of her daughter into her heart.

And then...

She dissipated like a mist.

"Mother?" Brightmoon hurriedly called out.

.....

The world of the Grand Xia. Whitepole Commandery. Within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, hovering in midair. Ning's residence.

Yu Wei's slender, pale fingers held the black jade bottle as she looked towards Ning.

She still remembered the first time she had met this junior apprentice-brother of hers...it was back when Ning had first entered the Black-White College. During the Dao Debates at the Black-White College, Ning had repeatedly overcome all challengers in an absolutely dazzling fashion, causing Yu Wei to become intrigued. She thus personally challenged Ning to a duel. Perhaps...even as far as back then, she had subconsciously wanted to leave Ning with an impression of her.

That trip to the Witchriver Immortal Estate...she had watched as Ning and Ninelotus had parted ways, watched as Ning had left all by himself...

In the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers...she had experienced life and death by his side. She had protected him, and he had protected her. Their hearts had grown closer, and when she suddenly was faced with life-threatening danger, he had finally charged forward and taken her into his arms. Faced with his embrace, she could no longer hold back. Even though she was a member of the Seamless Alliance, she swore an oath to herself to never, ever hurt him.

Later on, she had returned from her tutelage under Patriarch Lu, and Ning had come back as well.

Finally, they were together.

Be it her past life or her present life...these days were the happiest days she had ever experienced. They had viewed flowers together, watched the moon together, and their two hearts were like one...

She would stroke her belly, watching as her junior apprentice-brother practiced with the sword...

She would prepare delicacies as she waited for her junior apprentice-brother to return...

And finally...finally! Their daughter was safely born into the world.

Although the Godking had issued the order soon afterwards, at least the two of them had been given some time together, and at least they now had a child together...

It was enough. These happy days had been the most blissful, joyful days she had ever experienced, in this life or the previous one.

Only...she truly felt sorry towards her junior apprentice-brother, towards their daughter...

Thousands of thoughts, countless emotions...they all flashed through her mind.

Right at this moment, within the Violetdawn Pearl's world, Yu Wei's incarnation was tightly holding her daughter in her arms as tears began to cascade from her eyes.

CRACK!

The slender, white, dainty fingers...shattered the black jade bottle.

Ning had been in a superb mood. The sound of the shattering jade bottle was like an explosion that rang out against his very soul. He stared at the already-shattered black jade bottle in disbelief. How... how could...

Whooooosh.

Silently and soundlessly, Shennong's medicine that had been contained within the black jade bottle began to immediately spread outwards in every direction.

Ning and Yu Wei were the first to be affected by it. The Immortal energy within their bodies was instantly congealed, giving them no way to activate it at all.

"What just happened?"

"This..."

"Heavens..."

Almost instantly, all of the Loose Immortals and Celestial Immortals within the Darknorth army camp felt their bodies turn soft. Their Immortal energy became completely unusable, and the light, airy feeling of grace they usually felt was gone as well. They were like completely ordinary mortals.

Shennong's medicine quickly began to spread out in every direction.

It spread out to cover an area of ten thousand kilometers...and in truth, the entire Eight Dragons Cloudcity was only ten thousand kilometers in size.

"SHIT!!!"

A furious roar rang out, echoing throughout the entire Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

This was Daofather Crimsonbright's voice.

Instantly, a surge of powerful energy swept out and encompassed the city, immediately curtailing the spread of Shennong's medicine and causing it to remain where it was. However...although Daofather Crimsonbright had reacted quite quickly, a terrifying number of Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals had been afflicted. The poison had spread far, far beyond the confines of the Darknorth army camp.

Ning just stared disbelievingly at his senior apprentice-sister.

His soul was shaking.

His heart was trembling.

His Dao-heart was strong...but no matter how strong it was, Ning was still thrust into a state of terror and absolute disbelief.

Not even the most terrifying of demonheart tribulations would have

been capable of throwing Ning into a state of despair like he currently felt. When the black jade bottle had been shattered, Ning had instantly realized, but...his realization only caused him utter terror.

Yu Wei looked at Ji Ning.

Ji Ning looked at Yu Wei.

Their gazes met in midair.

This moment...

It became a moment eternal, a memory eternal.

Ning could sense the endless love and affection contained within his senior apprentice-sister's eyes, could sense how absolutely unwilling she was to part from him. He could sense that her love for him in this moment was so deep, it was etched into her very bones, into her very soul. He could also sense something else in her gaze...

Regret.

"I'm sorry." Yu Wei said these words softly. She just looked at Ning, as though she wanted to completely memorize his appearance and imprint it into the deepest parts of her soul.

Whoosh...

The wind blows...the sand flies...

Yu Wei's immediately body began to break apart and collapse, as though it was being transformed into tiny granules of sand. It was like a tiny flame being extinguished. In the instant that she had shattered the black jade bottle, she had unhesitatingly chosen to end her life as well. Her Celestial Immortal Jindan had already completely collapsed.

It was like a wind blew past...and she was like smoke being blown

away by the wind, completely vanishing from the world.

Ning reached out with his hands, wanting to catch something...but there was nothing to catch.

He stood there stupidly, arms stretched out.

His inability to use his Immortal energy?

The fact that the destruction of Shennong's medicine would influence the entire Realmwar?

The fact that they might lose this Realmwar?

None of these thoughts entered Ning's mind at all...

He just stared blankly at the spot where his senior apprentice-sister had been sitting. Just now, a moment ago, she had been sitting there. She had prepared Immortal wine for him, had smiled merrily at him, just as she had always done whenever he had returned from those many battles.

But...

It was all gone now!

There was no one seated on that chair. It was empty...as though Yu Wei had never been there, had never existed.

"Her soul's gone?"

"It's all gone..."

Ning mumbled to himself, "Gone...she's gone...gone forever..."

"Why is it..."

"Why did it have to be like this..."

"Father and Mother are gone. Now, she's gone as well." Ning just sat

there woodenly. It was though he had lost his soul. He just stared blankly at the place where she had sat. Just moments ago, she had sat there. She had smiled at him, a smile that had made Ning feel so warm, so blissful.

BOOM!

A figure appeared out of nowhere. It was the utterly enraged Daofather Crimsonbright.

Ning, however, just continued to sit there, staring at the place where she had sat. Staring at the place where she had been...

Chapter 47 – Shennong and Subhuti

Daofather Crimsonbright stared at the Immortal wine, drinking instruments, and shattered pieces of black jade that were on the table. He then looked towards the numb, unmoving Ji Ning. The look in Ning's eyes caused Daofather Crimsonbright to shake his head.

"Ugh!" He flourished his sleeves and left.

"Master."

Just as Daofather Crimsonbright was leaving the room, the Xia Emperor came in.

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity was the Xia Emperor's treasure. Thus, he was the second to find out about what had happened.

"Master!" The Xia Emperor called out repeatedly.

"We lost...we lost." Daofather Crimsonbright shook his head and sighed. "Our Crimsonbright Realm has already suffered heavy casualties during this Realmwar. I had thought that with Human Emperor Shennong's help, we would be able to win, but...who would've thought that Ji Ning's Dao-companion, Yu Wei, a disciple of Lu Dongbin...was actually a spy for the Seamless Gate as well. All our plans have come to nothing!"

"Don't we have another bottle of Shennong's medicine?" The Xia Emperor asked frantically.

"It's useless." Daofather Crimsonbright sighed. "Those Empyrean God golems of the Seamless Gate require a hundred Celestial Immortals, but the Daofather golem only requires a single Pure Yang True Immortal. This is because the core formation-diagrams of the Daofather golem can be powered by essence chaostones. The power of the essence chaostones can be converted directly into the power of primordial chaos, giving the Daofather golem endless amounts of power. The Daofather golem, however, is protected by layers of

defenses. Even if I were to personally intervene, I wouldn't be able to penetrate it. Not with a coresense attack, not with any other attacks. Shennong's medicine is unable to penetrate the Daofather golem as well."

"Now that Ji Ning's portion of the medicine is gone, leaving only one portion behind...the Daofather golem of the Seamless Gate will completely focus on the holder of that portion. When it strikes, the rest of us will be completely unable to keep that portion safe."

Daofather Crimsonbright felt quite resigned.

"Can't we split up that portion into two smaller portions?" The Xia Emperor asked.

"What do you take it for? It's a perfect, complete concoction; you can't just split it up. Its power comes from its perfection and its completeness." Daofather Crimsonbright shook his head. "If it could be split apart, I would've split it into a hundred parts long ago."

"Is there really nothing left to us?" The Xia Emperor simply couldn't accept this. He truly could not. The world of the Grand Xia which he had commanded and toiled over for countless years...the homeland of his Xiamang clan...it was now gone, just like that?

"There's nothing left." Daofather Crimsonbright shook his head. "Our only choice is to seek out Human Emperor Shennong once more and see if he has any ideas. However, the Human Emperor has already done much for us. Alas..."

"The antidote is with Ji Ning. Go and spread it out to the others. Rescue the Pure Yang True Immortals and Celestial Immortals first."

"Yes." The Xia Emperor nodded, then hurriedly said, "Master, don't take your anger out on Ji Ning. I saw him through the door just now. He's completely dazed by this blow. His Dao-companion was actually a spy that had been inserted by the Seamless Gate. This has been a tremendous mental blow to him. His most beloved Dao-companion

was a spy, an enemy..." The Xia Emperor sighed.

"Of course I won't take it out on him. Yu Wei was a spy, but Ji Ning is one of our warriors." Daofather Crimsonbright turned his head to stare through the doorway as well, looking at Ji Ning. "I hope that this won't do too much lasting damage to him. Snowdance was killed by the person she loved. While Ji Ning didn't die...I imagine the amount of pain he feels right now isn't much less than the amount which Snowdance felt. Help out and ensure that others don't come here to berate him either. He's only trained for a short period of time, after all."

"Yes," the Xia Emperor acknowledged respectfully.

.....

"What? Yu Wei was a traitor?"

"She actually harmed so many fellow Immortals."

"Pity our fellow Daoist Darknorth...his most beloved Dao-companion was actually an enemy spy."

"This Ji Ning character really is an idiot. This was a critical moment, and Shennong's medicine was so absolutely precious to us...how could he be so careless?"

Soon, all the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity learned of this matter. They all found it hard to accept this outcome, and some even were furious with Ning. Most of them, however, felt pity for him.

"Everyone, it's best if you don't bother Ji Ning." The Xia Emperor prevented many from going in to speak to Ning. Only those who had extremely close relationships with Ning were allowed to go in.

True Immortal Dongyan came as well. He just stood outside the door, looking at Ning.

"For something like this to happen to him..." True Immortal Dongyan let out a soft sigh. "However...based on what I know, generally speaking when the spies of the Seamless Gate reveal themselves, they will go berserk and show no mercy at all. Yu Wei actually didn't kill Ji Ning..."

"It doesn't matter. Yu Wei's dead now." The Xia Emperor nodded. "Ji Ning is definitely going to hate the Seamless Gate even more now. The Seamless Gate...they truly are willing to make use of anything and anyone. They truly will stoop to nothing at all. They all deserve to die."

.....

Within the skies of the Grand Xia.

An azure-robed figure with an Immortal sword on his back stood there, gazing at the distant Eight Dragons Cloudcity, his eyes filled with grief and pain. He let out a soft sigh. "Foolish child."

"She always kept everything hidden away. Although I could tell that she was hiding something, I didn't imagine that she was actually a spy for the Seamless Gate. But...she's not a bad person by nature." Grief and pain were apparent in Lu Dongbin's eyes. "Given how much trust Ning placed in her over the years, she could've slain him long ago. And in the end...she only destroyed the black jade bottle. She didn't hurt Ji Ning at all."

"She shattered her own soul?"

"She would rather shatter her own soul than let it return to the Seamless Gate?" Lu Dongbin shook his head.

The Godking of the Seamless Gate was capable of forcibly carrying off the souls of those he had imprinted...but Yu Wei had instead chosen to shatter her own soul than to let that happen.

"The reason why she decided to shatter that black jade bottle was probably to repay the Godking for his 'benevolence'."

"I heard long ago that the Seamless Gate has many spies, all of whom are extremely devoted to their Godking and willing to die for him if needed. He truly lives up to his reputation as the disciple of the Lord of the Demonheart...his ability to manipulate the hearts of men is indeed impressive. That foolish child shattered the jade black bottle to repay the Godking. As for suicide...she didn't want to cause Ji Ning any more problems in the future?"

Lu Dongbin loved to roam the mortal worlds, and had seen many scenes of grief, joy, parting, and gathering. He naturally understood what Yu Wei was thinking.

She...was simply a silly girl.

She had truly believed that the Godking had been extremely kind and benevolent towards her.

"To the Godking, she was nothing more than a slave, a weapon." Lu Dongbin shook his head. "But Ji Ning...alas..."

Lu Dongbin felt helpless as well.

Ji Ning was indeed a peerless talent. The storm had just barely begun, but he had already started shine and dazzle...but now, the person he cared about the most had died and left him. This blow...there was nothing Lu Dongbin could do to soften it. The only person who could help Ji Ning right now was Ji Ning himself.

.....

Outside the Three Realms. At the end of the vast Void, there was the even-vaster primordial chaos.

Within the primordial chaos, all things were possible.

It was the primordial chaos that had given birth to many powerful Fiendgods, to Pangu, to Nuwa, to the Ancestor Dragon, to the Phoenix, to the Torch Dragon, to Daoist Threelives, to Subhuti, to Crimsonbright...to all of them. The most powerful Fiendgod, Pangu,

had established Heaven and Earth, creating the utterly massive Pangu's Primordial World and perishing after his labors.

If yet another Pangu-like presence was born, he would absolutely be capable of establishing yet another world within the primordial chaos.

The primordial chaos was truly infinite and limitless, after all...after Mother Nuwa had entered the primordial chaos, she had never returned from it.

Within an area in the primordial chaos that was very close to the Three Realms.

There was a medicine field within the primordial chaos, and next to it was a thatched cottage. Two people were seated by the side of the cottage. One was the white-bearded Patriarch Subhuti, while the other was dressed in plain clothes and had unkempt hair and a tousled beard. He looked like an old farmer...but his eyes contained eternity within them, an ancientness that brought peace to the hearts of those who saw him.

He...was one of the Three Emperors of Mankind. Shennong!

Of the Three Emperors, Suiren was the most ancient, while Fuxi was always dressed in his Eight Trigram robes. Both had extraordinary appearances. Only Shennong dressed very simply, as though he was naught but an old farmer toiling away in his fields.

"This event is most likely going to cast a shadow over your disciple's heart." Shennong personally poured Subhuti a cup of tea. The tea bubbled and hissed, but it emanated a soothing, intoxicating fragrance.

"The Seamless Gate's subterfuge abilities are indeed unparalleled. There's no way to investigate them at all." Subhuti shook his head. "I've been thinking carefully about Yu Wei's past life and present life. I think it must be due to the fact that she suffered too much in her

past life. She transformed into a demon and massacred countless people. In the midst of her massacres, she was probably influenced by Demonheart. She was naturally guided towards their side, and in the end became a chess piece for their 'Godking'."

"Yes." Shennong nodded.

Now that they knew for a fact that Yu Wei was a spy, it wasn't too hard for them to spot the reason as to why she had joined the Seamless Gate.

However, if they didn't already know this, there was no way to find out. There were far, far too many Immortal cultivators who descended into madness and slaughter, after all. Some might have become truly filled with bloodlust and the desire to kill, while others had been driven crazy by the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations. There was no way to tell on the surface, no way at all.

"This time...Crimsonbright is going to lose." Shennong shook his head. "I just finished creating those two portions of Immortal medicine. Both were created using some unique herbs that I located in the primordial chaos that are incredibly rare. I can grow more of those herbs in my farm...but even if I change the flow of time to make them grow faster, I'll still need at least another century before I can finish another batch."

"If Crimsonbright loses, he'll naturally lead his army away from the Grand Xia. This disciple of yours...what are you planning to do about him?" Shennong asked.

Neither side had reached the point of entering a truly life-and-death struggle against the other yet. Both sides could easily retreat if they chose to. They could simply tear a hole through space and easily leave.

"Ji Ning has the [Starseizing Hand] of Threelives, and he's quite talented in heartforce as well. I feel, however, that his talent with the sword is even higher." Subhuti sighed. "He absolutely has the

potential to become yet another 'Houyi'."

"Houyi?" Shennong gently nodded.

Houyi was someone who, as an Empyrean God, had slain a Daofather! He was an absolute legend.

"But this truly was a heavy blow for him. Still...fortune and disaster ride together. Perhaps this will serve to help him temper his heart." Patriarch Subhuti shook his head. "Emotional matters like this...he'll have to rely on himself to overcome it. There's nothing I can do."

.....

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Ji Ning's residence.

Ning was finally on his feet. He began to collect the table, the Immortal wine, and the drinking utensils in an extremely careful manner. He even picked up all the shattered pieces of black jade.

"Ji Ning."

"Eighth brother."

Celestial Immortals Unity, Allbeasts, Whacko, and the others had all arrived.

"Don't let yourself hurt too much." Celestial Immortal Allbeasts patted Ning on the shoulder and said, "Something like this is completely unpredictable. Since Yu Wei was a spy...then you should just forget about her, eighth brother. Don't let this misery and unhappiness fester away in your heart."

"Forget her," Celestial Immortal Whacko exhorted softly as well. "When Thousand Needles died, I felt so much pain that I wanted to die...but what can you do? We have to look forward, move forward. Forget her. It'll make things easier for you."

Ning raised his head to look at Whacko. His voice was slightly hoarse.

"Seventh brother...have you been able to forget her?"

Chapter 48 – Ji Ning and the Godking

Whacko was stunned. For a moment, he couldn't say a word.

"All of you can go back now. Let me be by myself for a while," Ning said, then began to walk towards a nearby private room. This was the private room which Yu Wei had designed for him back when they had first arrived here.

Celestial Immortals Allbeasts, Rainsoar, Unity, and the others all watched as Ning walked away, then exchanged glances with each other. There was nothing they could do. They left the house.

.....

The private room was very simple, as were the prayer mats and the incense burners...but Yu Wei had personally laid out this room.

Ning swept the room with his gaze. He felt as though he could see Yu Wei decorating the room.

"Senior apprentice-sister," Ning murmured softly.

He then sat down in the lotus position by himself, closing his eyes.

His thoughts were a complete mess. The countless scenes of him being together with Yu Wei flooded his mind, and he couldn't help but repeatedly grimace.

Rumble...

A profound, arcane sort of ripple that came from another level of existence brushed past Ning. Not even Daofather Crimsonbright could detect this ripple. As it brushed past Ning, a powerful desire to sleep quickly filled him.

"Eh?!" Ning was shocked. He was a Pure Yang True Immortal; he wouldn't be so easily mesmerized.

"I am the Godking of the Seamless Gate. You should know of me." A voice rang out in Ning's mind.

"You?" Ning's mind was filled with boundless hate.

After having fought for so long, Ning had naturally engaged the Xia Emperor and the others in conversation. He knew, of course, that the true supreme commander of the Seamless Gate was the Godking. The Nuwa Alliance had learned long ago that the Godking was able to control the world of dreams, was capable of meeting others in their dreams. The Nuwa Alliance, however, was unable to counter this ability of his; they were completely unable to penetrate the dreamworlds which the Godking created.

"I'm going to guide a strand of your thoughts into my world. Let us converse," the Godking said.

"Fine." Ning didn't refuse. He was within the Eight Dragons Cloudcity; he wouldn't be in much danger at all. Just a strand of his thoughts... even if that strand was severed, it wouldn't be much of a loss.

Ning allowed a strand of his mind to be guided downwards, downwards into the abyss...

.....

Within a vast world of darkness.

A gigantic throne that was thirty thousand meters high was levitating in midair. The Godking was seated on his throne, and before him appeared the figure of Ji Ning.

Ning raised his head to glance coldly at the black-robed figure in midair. The aura around the black robes caused the Godking to seem exceptionally inscrutable and mysterious. Ning said coldly, "Why has an exalted Daofather such as yourself come to seek me out?" Although his heart was filled with boundless hatred, enough hatred to cause an ordinary mortal to go insane...Ning knew very well that the difference in power between himself and the supreme

commander of the Seamless Alliance was too great.

"No need to feel such hatred for me." The Godking sat up high on his throne as he spoke calmly to Ji Ning. "We are enemies, after all; the actions I took, I took to guarantee that the Seamless Gate would win. I've come to you...because I wish for you to join the Seamless Gate."

"Idiocy." This was the only word Ning said. He couldn't even be bothered to say more.

"Do you think...that Yu Wei is dead?" The Godking asked.

Ning was stunned.

"What?" Ning stared at the Godking. "I personally watched as my senior apprentice-sister's soul was shattered. How could she not be?"

"Yes, her soul was shattered...but she didn't die." Amusement could be heard within the Godking's voice. "After her soul was shattered, her truesoul would've headed straight towards the River of Destiny, yes?"

Ning didn't say anything. This was indeed true. Even if Yu Wei's soul was shattered...if one could locate Yu Wei's truesoul within the River of Destiny, the truesoul could be used to bring her back to life once more! However, to find a truesoul within the River of Destiny...based on what Ning knew, the only one in the entire Three Realms capable of this was Mother Nuwa. Mother Nuwa, however, had long ago entered the infinite primordial chaos...

"Yu Wei was one of the many spies I sent to infiltrate the Nuwa Alliance," the Godking said. "Of the many spies, some were absolutely and unwaveringly loyal to me. They obey all my orders and commands, and are willing to die for me. These true believers...long ago left behind my imprint upon their souls."

Ning's pupils contracted.

"Yu Wei committed suicide, shattering her soul...but thanks to the

imprint I left behind on it, I knew right away what she had done," the Godking said. "Thus, as her soul was shattering, I immediately reached out to latch onto her truesoul, taking it away. Her truesoul isn't in the River of Destiny at all."

Ning's heart began to quiver.

"After taking away her truesoul, I sent it to be reincarnated within a lesser cycle of reincarnation which I set up," the Godking said. Ning knew that most Daofathers were capable of setting up a lesser cycle of reincarnation; Daofather Crimsonbright himself had done such a thing.

Once a truesoul entered the cycle of reincarnation, it would naturally be reborn.

When Celestial Immortals and True Immortals were reborn, it was generally their truesouls which were reborn.

"After she was reborn, I immediately awakened her memories and captured her young soul. Take...a close look." The Godking pointed with one finger.

Instantly, roughly a hundred meters to the right of Ji Ning, a black-robed maiden appeared out of thin air. Her appearance...her aura...her eyes...

"Senior apprentice-sister?" Ning couldn't believe it...but he knew it to be true.

Some things could be imitated, but the look in one's eyes could not.

"Ji Ning, she cannot hear you or see you. Just stand there and watch," the Godking's voice rang out.

"Respectful greetings to you, Godking." Yu Wei had a somewhat stunned look her face as she fell to her knees.

"Yu Wei...did you think that if you committed suicide, your soul would

be destroyed?" The Godking's voice held a hint of wrath within it. "I told you that once you were prepared to destroy Shennong's medicine, you were to first touch the imprint I left upon your soul, and I would rescue it right away. Why did you choose to commit suicide? If I was just slightly slower, your truesoul would've entered the River of Destiny, never to be found again."

Yu Wei remained there on her knees. "Godking, please grant me death."

"Grant you death?" The Godking said coldly, "What, are you afraid that if you remain alive, you'll bring Ji Ning more trouble?"

The kneeling Yu Wei didn't move at all.

"You truly are quite loyal to this Ji Ning of yours. Long ago, when I ordered you to take him to the Fifth World, you refused. And now, you would rather die than become a chess piece our Seamless Gate can use to influence him. You truly disappoint me." The Godking was rather angry now.

Yu Wei remained on her knees, her tears cascading downwards.

She truly was very devoted to the Godking. She couldn't help but feel miserable upon hearing that the Godking was disappointed in her... but she truly didn't wish to become a burden to Ji Ning or her daughter.

Whoosh. The Godking blew towards her, and a wind arose that swept her away, causing her to disappear.

"Senior apprentice-sister." Ning was shocked. That definitely had been his senior apprentice-sister; there was no mistaking it at all. That look in her eyes...there was definitely no mistaking it!

"Don't panic." The Godking looked towards Ning. "Your Dao-companion's soul is fine. Only a sliver of her mind was within this dreamworld of mine. Now that her truesoul has been reborn, her new soul is incredibly weak. She isn't even capable of committing

suicide. Her fate...is now completely in your hands."

"My hands?" Ning's face changed.

"Right!" The Godking's dark, misty eyes seemed to flash with lightning. "Your hands. If you join our Seamless Gate, then I can let you once more reunite with your beloved Dao-companion and live together in bliss. Under the Seamless Gate's protection...not even your master, Daofather Subhuti, would be able to kill you. In addition, your master most likely wouldn't be willing to violate our unspoken accord and personally act to kill you. He is a Daofather, after all."

"Thus..."

"If you join our Seamless Gate, then you, your Dao-companion Yu Wei, and your child...all of you will be able to live together in bliss. You will also receive our protection!"

"But if you do not join us...the soul of your Dao-companion Yu Wei shall suffer endless, inescapable torment within my Infinity Hells. As for you and your child...you shall remain enemies of the Seamless Gate, forever suffering our assaults."

The Godking looked at Ning. "I trust you know which choice you should make."

"Take another look." The Godking pointed sideways.

Whoosh.

A painting appeared out of nowhere.

This was the painting of a vast world, a world of flames, of mountains of blades, of lakes of burning oil, of forests of swords, of implements of torture. Many souls were here, undergoing countless torments and punishments. A black-robed maiden had been teleported here as well. Upon seeing the Infinity Hells, upon seeing the despair and misery of those countless souls...the look on her face couldn't help

but change.

But moments later, Yu Wei calmed down. She had guessed long ago that she would probably be sent to the Godking's Infinity Hells.

"These are the Infinity Hells, a place I created. It's an even more painful place than the eighteen layer of Hell of the Netherworld Kingdom." The Godking looked at Ning. "If you are the enemy of the Seamless Gate...then Yu Wei will no longer be of use to me. Thus, she should prepare herself to suffer endless, infinite torture within the Infinity Hells."

"She was so loyal to you!" Ning couldn't help but snap.

"Loyal?" The Godking shook his head. "No. If she was loyal to me...you would've died long ago."

Ning was stunned.

Right.

He himself could sense how badly the Seamless Gate wished to kill him. The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater, for example, had always been hovering around him. Before that, the Seamless Gate had actually sent out a squad to assassinate him. Fortunately, Old Man Yuan had intervened. If Yu Wei had wanted him dead...given his absolute faith in her, he would've died long ago.

"She violated my orders," the Godking said. "Given my temper...I should've cast her into the Infinity Hells long ago, letting her suffer endless torment. However, she was the disciple of Lu Dongbin and your Dao-companion. It is hard to find someone like her, and so I showed her clemency."

In truth, when Yu Wei had refused the Godking's commands all those years ago, she had already mentally prepared herself for death.

That time, the Godking had shown clemency...which was why Yu Wei had wanted to give Ning a child.

"Thus, she should have started to suffer this sort of torture long ago. To violate my orders? The only result can be death." The Godking looked towards Ning. "But Ji Ning, your talent is truly remarkable; you are qualified to me to reconsider. The Seamless Gate views you as being very important...and so if you can join us, Yu Wei will immediately be spared her eternal torment. She'll even be allowed to accompany you and your child. The three of you will be able to live together with each other forever."

The Godking truly wished to be able to pull Ji Ning to his side.

Ji Ning was a tremendous threat, true. But if they could recruit him... the Seamless Gate would've gained yet another helper, while the Nuwa Alliance would've lost one of their peerless talents. This was a result that was much better than merely killing Ji Ning. As for Yu Wei...she was the tool which the Seamless Gate was relying on to make this happen.

"Join our Seamless Gate. We have treasures, divine abilities, golems... everything. You, your child, and your Dao-companion will be able to join together once more." The Godking pointed towards the midair images. "I trust you won't consigned the woman you love into the Infinity Hells."

Ning was silent.

He just stood there, looking at the image of his senior apprentice-sister, Yu Wei. He just silently stood there.

Chapter 49 – The Choice

Ji Ning had never doubted Yu Wei's love for him. When the two had been together, he had been able to truly sense her heart. His parents had passed away, but she had let him once more feel warmth in his heart. It was something which surpassed simple love; only when love reached a truly deep level would it bring this sort of warmth.

But...

There were others that Ning could never forget.

If it hadn't been for Daoist Threelives' legacy, he probably would've died long ago when he was weak!

If it wasn't for the seven mighty Empyrean Gods, he would've perished long ago!

If it wasn't for his master Subhuti, he would've lost his life in the Nihilum Zone!

His master, Immortal Diancai...his fellow disciple, Mu Northson...they were filled with endless hatred towards the Seamless Gate.

His father...his mother...their situation was probably even worse than Yu Wei's. Their truesouls had already entered the River of Destiny... and with Mother Nuwa having disappeared into the primordial chaos, the fact that their souls had been shattered meant that they were essentially dead and gone.

To bring Mother Nuwa back?

To reach Mother Nuwa's level?

It would be very hard! Even harder than defeating the Seamless Alliance!

.....

Fog continued to billow around the Godking's black robes. He stared downwards at Ji Ning, awaiting his response. He knew very well that this was perhaps his best chance of making Ji Ning join the Seamless Gate...because Yu Wei could be described as the most important person in Ji Ning's life. Their souls were tied together...and as the Godking had said, Yu Wei had chosen to die rather than be a burden to Ji Ning.

As the disciple of a Daofather, Ji Ning himself wouldn't be blamed or directly affected by a defeat in this Realmwar.

The entire vast world of darkness was deathly still, terrifyingly still.

Ning just stood there quietly, staring at the image of his senior apprentice-sister. It seemed as though he wanted to permanently engrave her appearance in his mind.

"Make your choice," the Godking said. "Don't try to deceive me. You won't be able to."

Ning trembled.

He was silent for a moment. Then, Ning broke his silence and said in a soft voice, "Let me look at her for a bit longer."

The Godking was instantly enraged!

Even the fog that was billowing around the black robes and the massive throne began to roil about. Visible crackles of lightning could be seen within the fog, utterly dazzling to behold. The Godking forced down his rage, then growled, "You have decided to remain enemies with my Seamless Gate? Your most beloved Dao-companion is about to be exiled into the Infinity Hells. You have the power to keep her safe and let her be by your side and your child's side...but you are now choosing to send her into Hell, never to be reborn!"

The Godking's every word stabbed like knives against Ning's heart.

"The choice is yours!" The entire vast world of darkness was shaking.

Clearly, the Godking was almost unable to repress his anger.

Deep, boundless pain could be seen within Ning's eyes...but he just stood there and quietly stared at his senior apprentice-sister.

Suddenly...

Ning turned, looked at the Godking, then with a thudding sound respectfully fell to his knees.

The Godking was instantly delighted. He even left his vast throne and walked downwards towards Ning. "Hahaha, Ji Ning...this is a wise decision you have just..." But Ning suddenly spoke out, interrupting the Godking's words.

"Godking, you are an exalted Daofather." Ning remained on his knees. "I know that my senior apprentice-sister experienced great hardship in her past life, and I imagine you must have been benevolent towards her. In turn, she was completely loyal to you, going so far as to destroy Shennong's medicine. It can be said that she rendered a major contribution to the Seamless Gate. I'd like to ask you, Godking, not to bicker with a poor little girl like her. I wouldn't dare beg that you send my senior apprentice-sister back to my side, Godking; all I hope is that she can live a simple, peaceful life. If you can do this, I will be endlessly grateful."

The kneeling Ji Ning's voice was filled with supplication.

The Godking had already left his throne and landed on the ground. He was momentarily stunned...and then he grew even further enraged. He roared furiously, "Ji Ning!!!! You will be 'grateful'? 'Poor little girl'? This is a WAR!!! You only have two options! If you refuse me, then she will definitely be sent to suffer endless torment."

"Go! Send Yu Wei to her justly deserved torments for all eternity. Let her never be reborn!" The Godking's furious roar rang out, reverberating within the Infinity Hells.

"Yes."

Instantly, two black-robed envoys took hold of Yu Wei and sent her to a fiery abyss...

Ning continued to kneel there.

"Godking." Ning looked towards the Godking.

"You only have two options. Stand by my side...or be my enemy!" The entire world of darkness was filled with wrath and fury.

Ning rose to his feet, quietly staring at the painting and at the images of his senior apprentice-sister suffering fiery torment within it.

And then...

Ning turned around.

Whoosh!

He vanished from this dreamworld.

"Damn!" The Godking roared with fury, causing the entire world of darkness to shake. "Damn, damn, DAMN!!!"

"Your lover will suffer torment...and you, you will soon die as well! You will DIE!" The Godking was truly enraged. He truly had wanted to recruit Ji Ning to his side...but he had actually been refused. He was humiliated, enraged, and filled with a desire to kill. But the Nuwa Alliance was very powerful; to kill Ji Ning would be no easy task.

.....

"You are the one who personally consigned her to endless torment within the Infinity Hells! It was you! You personally!!!" The Godking's furious roars reverberated with Ning's mind.

BOOM!

Ning's powerful coresense struck out against that thought-strand,

blasting it apart. This undetectable method which the Godking was using...although not even Daofathers could sense it, it didn't contain much power.

Within the world of the Violetdawn Pearl.

Creaaak. Ning's true body walked out from his study. Soon, he arrived at the room where his daughter Brightmoon was being punished.

His daughter Brightmoon was still on her knees, her eyes filled with puzzlement and confusion.

"Father." When Brightmoon saw Ning, she immediately revealed a look of joy. "I was wrong. I really understand that I was wrong. Don't be angry, Father. I'll never dare to use fire to play with mortals in the future."

Ning walked to his daughter's side, then fell to his knees, quietly taking her into his arms.

Brightmoon couldn't help but reveal a look of joy as her father took her into his arms. She comfortably snuggled into Ning's chest.

"Father, don't be angry anymore. Ahaha, Mother came a short while ago to hug me as well...but then she said 'sorry'. Sorry? I don't really understand...but then, Mother disappeared. Father, didn't you say that Mother left her incarnation here? Why did her incarnation suddenly leave?"

Ning trembled.

So...

So she hadn't just said 'sorry' to him. She had said 'sorry' to their daughter as well.

"Father?" Brightmoon could sense that something was wrong with Ning.

Ning continued to hold his daughter in his arms. He said in a soft voice, "I'm the one who should be sorry to your mother." Ning shut his eyes, his tears coming out.

It was true!

He felt so sorry!

Although the Godking had forced him to make a decision...in the end, he had decided to let her be sent to the Infinity Hells. Ning felt as though countless ants were constantly gnawing upon his heart.

He felt utter agony in his heart.

Guilt.

Misery.

Prior to this, Ning hadn't shed any tears, not even when he had seen her soul be shattered. He had been delighted to discover that she wasn't dead, then instantly had to face a choice that brought despair. He had to watch as she began to be tortured within the Infinity Hells...but despite all that, Ning hadn't shed any tears.

Now, however, as he held his daughter in his arms, Ning could no longer resist. Finally, he began to cry.

Hot tears came cascading down his face, landing on Brightmoon's body. Brightmoon was stunned. Raising her head, she looked towards Ning. She saw that her father...was actually crying.

"What happened? Where's Mother?" Brightmoon was very clever. She immediately asked this question.

"She died." Ning held his daughter in his arms as he responded in a soft voice.

"Died?" Brightmoon was stunned. Although she was precocious and intelligent, she was truly stunned. The only thing she could do was

just stupidly stand there and hug her father.

"Brightmoon...in the future, it'll just be you and me."

Ning continued to hold his daughter in his arms. She had just been born...but her mother had already left.

"Senior apprentice-sister...I'm sorry. I swear...I'll take good care of our child. I definitely will." The only thing and the most important thing Ning could do for his senior apprentice-sister, for himself, was to take good care of and protect their daughter.

"And the Seamless Gate..."

His tears continued to fall, but deep within his eyes, a desire to kill that was even deeper than the Abyss could be seen.

.....

The Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

Ji Ning emerged from his room.

"He came out?" The Xia Emperor looked towards Ning.

"Your Imperial Majesty, you've been here this entire time?" Ning was stunned.

"If I wasn't here...do you think you would've had such a peaceful time of it? Countless people have come to speak to you. Some came to console you, but some came to curse you and berate you." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "I can't blame them. We were on the cusp of winning this Realmwar, after all, but now...alas. Once this Realmwar is lost, the worlds and the foundations that these Empyrean Gods and True Immortals spent countless years cultivating will be taken away by the Seamless Gate. How can they not be enraged? Still, don't be angry with them. After some time passes, they'll slowly begin to accept this outcome."

Ning looked towards the Xia Emperor.

He could sense that these words of the Xia Emperor held a hint of frustration and disappointment within them.

With the war lost, the Xia Emperor would lose his Grand Xia world. That was the foundation of his Xiamang clan, a vast world which he had spent his blood and sweat to build up, ever since he had taken it over during the Fiendgod Era. How could he not be heartbroken? But the Xia Emperor didn't blame Ji Ning; instead, he had stayed outside and prevented many people from coming in, ensuring that Ji Ning wouldn't be disturbed. Ning knew very well that the fact that they had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory would be very difficult for many of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to accept. They would be utterly enraged and heartbroken.

"Are we really going to lose?" Ning asked.

"We really are." The Xia Emperor sighed, then nodded his head.

Chapter 50 – Though I Come From the Mortal Dust, My Heart Still Soars Towards the Heavens

“Although there are many people who are unwilling to accept this, the difference in power is too great.” The Xia Emperor shook his head. “The Seamless Gate has a Daofather golem on their side, while we were going to rely on Shennong’s medicine to win the battle, but...well, now we shall simply wait for the Daofather to give us our final orders.”

Ji Ning nodded gently.

“It’s my fault,” Ning said calmly.

“This isn’t your fault. You couldn’t have imagined that Yu Wei belongs to the Seamless Gate. There’s no need for you to overthink things. I’ve been outside and have prevented quite a few from coming in to bother you; this was on the Daofather’s personal instructions. The Daofather still views you as being extremely important.” The Xia Emperor looked towards Ji Ning.

The Xia Emperor suddenly remembered something. He immediately said, “Right, you should be unable to use your Immortal energy right now, right? I’ll give you ten drops of the antidote.”

“Give me a hundred,” Ning said.

“A hundred?” The Xia Emperor looked towards Ning with surprise. “You...”

Ning didn’t explain. What would be the point of explaining that he had become a Pure Yang True Immortal? His Heaven Punisher was still at the same level of power that it always was; it wouldn’t be able to change the outcome of the battle at all. It was best not to give them any false hopes.

“Fine. Take it.” The Xia Emperor took out a jade bottle and a large gourd. Drops of liquid flew out from the gourd and into the jade

bottle. After a hundred drops were absorbed, he handed it to Ning.

Ning accepted it, then began to go towards the outside.

"Isn't that Commander Ji Ning?"

"That's Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning!"

"I heard that his Dao-companion was a spy for the Seamless Gate!"

"Yes, I heard the same. We were at the cusp of victory, but this Ji Ning guy placed too much faith in his Dao-companion, giving her the chance to destroy Shennong's medicine, and our hopes for victory along with it. We've fought for so long...so many of us have died...and it was all for nothing. Immortal Darknorth was far too careless...and he was far too trusting of his Dao-companion!"

"Fellow Daoist Wangxiu, you go too far! A Dao-companion is the most important companion anyone will have on their Immortal path. Both Dao-companions will support each other and assist each other. How many would be suspicious of their Dao-companions? If they were, they wouldn't have become Dao-companions to begin with!"

"Poor Immortal Darknorth, to be betrayed by his Dao-companion like that."

"Yeah, poor bastard."

As Ning walked through the Eight Dragons Cloudcity and passed by the various military camps, the various Immortals within those camps all looked at Ning and whispered amongst themselves. With the story being told and retold, the truth had long since become rather blurred...but the countless Immortals and Fiendgods continued to discuss it, as this was what had caused them to lose this entire Realmwar."

"I heard that Yu Wei took advantage of Immortal Darknorth's trust to destroy Shennong's medicine. Immortal Darknorth was so enraged and heartbroken that he personally wiped out Yu Wei, shattering her

very soul."

"Right, I heard the same, that Immortal Darknorth personally killed that traitor."

"It's all that damned traitor's fault."

As Ning continued to walk through the city, his ears began to twitch and a hint of grief appeared in his eyes. He knew that once the story began to spread, this would become a popular version. He hadn't killed his senior apprentice-sister; she had shattered her own soul, because she no longer wanted to be under the control of the Seamless Gate. But now, she was suffering endless torment and torture within the Infinity Hells. Although it was the Godking who was doing this...it was true that Ning had decided to leave her there.

After walking for a long time...

Ning arrived at the city walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. He sat down atop the city walls, all by his lonesome as he quietly stared at the utterly devastated battlefield beyond the walls. He also saw the vast, dark citadel of the Seamless City, hovering in the sky in the distance.

The Seamless City. The Eight Dragons Cloudcity. They continued to face each other. Clearly...this great war hadn't truly ended yet.

"Ji Ning?" As soon as True Immortal Dongyan walked out from his palace, he could see that that solitary figure seated atop the city walls. He could sense how withered, how haggard Ji Ning was right now. He didn't have the boundless vitality that he had in the past. In the past, Ji Ning always had a smile on his face, and his eyes were always bright. Right now, however...Ji Ning was like a mountain glacier that had been built up over thousands of years, filled with an infinitely cold and desolate aura.

"Ji Ning is man of deep emotions, and he cares deeply about love." Someone else walked to Dongyan's side; it was True Immortal

Cloudust, who let out a sigh. "This word, 'love'...it is absolutely ravaging."

"Yes." True Immortal Dongyan nodded. "To be betrayed by his most beloved Dao-companion...a blow like this...ugh, there's nothing we can do to help him. Right, fellow Daoist Cloudust...is there any chance left for our Crimsonbright Realm to win?"

True Immortal Cloudust was the follower of Human Emperor Shennong; he should have access to detailed intelligence.

True Immortal Cloudust shook his head. "There's almost no hope. Given the current state of the battle...the only chance we have is if we summon some of the most famous and powerful Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Three Realms. But these figures are needed everywhere, either to cow certain enemies or to deal with major threats. If we send them here, it'll have an impact on our force disposition across the entire Three Realms. In the end, the Crimsonbright Realm is just one of the weaker Realms, after all."

"It is a bit weak...but we've been fighting for years and have suffered countless casualties." True Immortal Dongyan didn't want to accept this.

All of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Crimsonbright Realm naturally felt strong ties towards their homeland. Nobody wanted for their homeland to be occupied by the Seamless Gate.

"For now, just wait. The Daofather has already gone to speak with the Human Emperor." True Immortal Cloudust continued, "Let's see if the Human Emperor has any ideas...but my feeling is that if the Human Emperor had any ideas, he would've reached out long ago."

True Immortal Dongyan nodded.

"Alas...if Shennong's medicine hadn't been destroyed...if Ji Ning hadn't given it to Yu Wei..." True Immortal Cloudust sighed.

True Immortal Dongyan sighed and shook his head. "Ji Ning trusted

his Dao-companion too much."

Given the current state of the war, almost all of the Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Grand Xia had lost their hope. Quite a few of them had been so furious with Ji Ning as to curse him aloud, but slowly they all began to calm down. They no longer blamed Ji Ning... because they knew that Ji Ning himself certainly hadn't hoped for this to happen!

"Where's Ji Ning?"

"He's still there atop the walls."

"It's been days. He hasn't even moved from the walls at all. I wonder what he's looking at?"

The Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were chatting amongst themselves.

"The Human Emperor has already sent word. There's nothing he can do. That medicine is too difficult to create; even the Human Emperor was only able to send some more of the antidote over to allow our Immortals to recover."

"The Human Emperor has given up?"

"He's actually given up..."

"My brothers all died in battle...was it all for nothing?"

"My Skysong clan's Heaven Punisher was destroyed. We had twelve Celestial Immortals in our ranks, but I was the only one lucky enough to survive. I had thought that after our grand victory, I would spend some time having our clan rest and rebuild. But now..."

Pain. Heartbreak.

The Crimsonbright Realm was their home. Their foundation. The place where countless generations of their clan members had toiled

over, shedding blood and sweat. They were willing to die for their homeland; they were even willing to accept the deaths of their brothers, masters, and disciples if it meant winning this battle. It would all be worth it! But...they weren't going to be able to win. They were going to lose!

.....

Ning was by himself atop the city walls.

"Ji Ning." The red-haired Empyrean God Redsnow had arrived. He gently patted Ning on the shoulders. "Bestir yourself. This is nothing more than one of many pitfalls you shall encounter on your Immortal path."

"I understand." Ning nodded.

"Once you move past it...you will see that the seas and the skies remain as vast as they ever were." Empyrean God Redsnow looked at Ning, hope in his eyes.

"Just give me a little more time to think things over," Ning said softly.

"Alright." Empyrean God Redsnow didn't try to force things. He knew very well what sort of a person Ji Ning was. That was why he liked Ji Ning so much, supporting him and believing him to be the most suitable successor to the Starseizing Manor! Only a man who cared deeply about relationships would win the trust of his comrades. Selfish individuals like Sword Immortal Evergreen...how many would truly be willing to trust and befriend him?

However, people who cared deeply about relationships would also be deeply wounded by them.

In fact, even some of the major powers of the Three Realms had been deeply wounded in their relationships...and despite the passage of countless eras, they remained unable to truly heal from those wounds.

Empyrean God RedSnow left.

"Move past it?" Ning murmured to himself, "How can I move past it?"

Ning had felt tremendous despair when he saw Yu Wei die.

But now that he knew that Yu Wei wasn't dead...he was momentarily overjoyed, then forced to make a choice. He had chosen to personally consign Yu Wei to the Infinity Hells. This caused Ning to feel even greater heartbreak.

Although his body remained in the mortal world, his heart had already entered Hell.

Guilt.

Pain.

Ning wanted to force them all down, to suppress them, to move past it all...but how could he possibly suppress them all?

"I confidently viewed myself as a favored son of heaven, as a formidably talented figure. But I was wrong. I was wrong. She's now suffering endless torment in the Infinity Hells, but there's nothing I can do. Not a damn thing." Ning stared at the desolate landscape, which had long ago become utterly ruined and ravaged by the wars between the Immortals and Fiendgods. "I'm just like this landscape here. Like the grass atop the ground. In the face of the Immortals and Fiendgods who do battle...the only thing the grass can do is be trampled upon and destroyed, because it can't fight back at all."

"Weak."

"I'm still puny and weak."

"Formidably talented? No matter how talented I am, it will be a long, long time before I can possibly be a match for the Godking. In the here and now...I remain very weak. Faced with the Godking's power, all I could do was to let it all happen. I wasn't able to stop him, to

push back at all."

The utter despair he felt...what he witnessed first-hand was what caused it to be etched into his bones and imprinted into his soul.

The Godking made Ji Ning choose.

Ji Ning had no choice but to choose!

He could only watch as the Godking sent Yu Wei into the Infinity Hells! The only thing he could do was to kneel down and hope that he could move the Godking with his words...but alas, it was useless.

He was powerless!

Everything was under the Godking's control. The only thing Ning could do was accept it all.

Ning stared at the wild grass atop the ravaged landscape. He felt like he was the grass; there was nothing he could do but be trampled upon, be broken, be attacked, be destroyed...the only thing he could do was to accept it!

As Ning was staring at the grass vacantly...

Ning's heart suddenly became completely calm, empty, and ephemeral.

The countless strands of grass...the dust...it seemed to spread into Ning's very heart, and Ning's heart itself was expanding as well to accommodate them. In fact, even the skies themselves seemed to extend into Ning's heart. Slowly, the entirety of Whitepole Commandery was contained within Ning's heart, which continued to grow and grow...

His heart was endlessly vast. As vast as Heaven and Earth, all of which was contained within his heart.

Ning's heart had reached out to encompass all 3600 commanderies.

In fact, it reached out to cover even the vast and massive seas. The entire world of the Grand Xia, protected by the planar membrane, was like a giant oval spheroid...and the entire vast spheroid had already become one with Ning's heart.

In fact, his heart was still trying to continue to expand, to stretch out to the vast, vacant Void itself.

It was a powerful, innate desire of his heart.

Ning sat there atop the city walls. He said softly to himself, "Though I come from the mortal dust, my heart still soars towards the heavens."

Chapter 51 – Heartforce, Stage Four

Ji Ning wiped the tears from his eyes. He understood that these were tears of joy, an uncontrollable joy that had come out upon his heart becoming one with Heaven in Earth.

“So...in the past, I was wrong, ridiculously wrong.”

“No wonder the truly supreme divine archers of the Three Realms are all so low-key.”

Ning finally understood the true nature of the fourth stage of heartforce, ‘mortal dust’.

It was like the grass upon the desolate battlefield...

It had to struggle to emerge from the dirt and grow up. It fought for every ray of sunshine, every drop of rain, because it wanted to grow higher and higher. It might be very low-key and unremarkable...but not even the most exalted major powers of the Three Realms could stop the will and the heart of the grass. The heart was infinite and unlimited; even a beggar could have the heart and ambitions of an emperor.

The power of the heart was invisible and formless...but it was incomparably marvelous.

Even mortals who had sufficiently powerful hearts and wills could create miracles. They would become heroes!

As for Immortal cultivators...

The number in the Three Realms who were able to reach the fourth stage of heartforce, ‘mortal dust’, was incredibly low! The number who managed to reach this fourth stage when at the Empyrean God or True Immortal level could be counted on one hand. Even amongst the exalted True Gods and Daofathers, the fourth stage essentially represented an absolute limit. Only one person had ever broken

past this limit...Houyi!

Houyi was the only person to ever reach the fifth stage of heartforce, and he even left behind a systemized technique for training in it. His power was acclaimed at all, but he had long ago disappeared.

From this, one could tell how incredibly difficult it was for one to reach the fourth stage of heartforce.

"I'm like the wild grass. I'm nothing more than an unremarkable blade of grass. In the face of the Godking, in the face of the major powers...I'm unbelievably weak." Ning had been seated atop the city walls, but he now rose to his feet and stared towards the skies. "But I want to walk further along my path, to make it to greater heights, to become even more powerful than the Godking. In fact, I want to reach Pangu and Nuwa's level...and then surpass them!"

"No matter how lowly a person might be, his heart is limitless." Ning felt very moved.

Prajna-states of enlightenment were profound, arcane, and unpredictable.

After experiencing so many setbacks and that agonizing choice... Ning's heart had indeed been greatly impacted. But only when he felt as downtrodden as he did right now did he truly understand what it meant to be as insignificant as a speck of mortal dust. And so, he slowly began to understand and gain insights into this stage.

Everyone knew the principles of this stage, but to truly understand it and to thoroughly comprehend it was far, far more difficult.

'Knowing' what to do is easy; it's the 'doing' that is tricky!

As Ning's heart had expanded, his heartforce had risen in power as well. When Ning's heart had reached the point of becoming one with the entire world of the Grand Xia and begun to reach out towards the infinite Void...his heartforce had truly reached an absolutely terrifying level, a level which represented an absolute limit for even

True Gods and Daofathers, many of whom had not been able to reach it.

The fourth stage of heartforce!

Ning had broken through!

Aside from the missing Houyi...Ning's heartforce could be ranked as the highest within the entire Three Realms!

"Always consider yourself as an unremarkable speck of mortal dust. Always reach for greater heights. Not even reaching Pangu's level is the end of your ambitions." Ning didn't know whether or not Pangu's level represented the endpoint for Immortal cultivation, but there was no endpoint for the heart. His heart could become infinitely vast, infinitely great.

"The difference between the fourth stage and the third stage is simply far too vast."

Reaching the third stage of heartforce allowed one to have the power of a supreme Celestial Immortal.

The fourth stage of heartforce, however, gave one the power of a supreme Empyrean God or True Immortal!

Every single Empyrean God and True Immortal who had reached the fourth stage of heartforce stood at the very peak of power amongst their peers. The divine archer Eastbreak, for example...after using Daofruits of primordial chaos, he was able to suppress an entire battlefield all by himself! Although the Daofruits were very powerful...if it hadn't been for Eastbreak's archery and coreforce, how could the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals have all been completely shut down?

"Although I've only reached the expert level in my soul heartforce technique...even reaching the level of perfect mastery would probably increase my power by a mere tenfold, by a single level of so."

"With my heartforce having increased from the third level to the fourth level...my power has increased by multiple levels."

Ning himself knew how much he had improved.

"It is time to see the Daofather." Ning rose to his feet. He felt guilt towards Daofather Crimsonbright. It had been the Daofather who had personally handed him Shennong's medicine in a show of tremendous faith. Although it was Yu Wei who had turned traitor...in the end, it was his fault!

Ning stared at the vast, desolate wilderness. He also stared at the enormous black levitating citadel, the Seamless City. He quietly murmured to himself, "This battle isn't over yet."

Prior to this, his Heaven Punisher was already very powerful. With his heartforce having increased by an entire major level...how powerful would his Heaven Punisher become? Not even Ning himself knew.

This was because only a few Empyrean Gods or True Immortals had ever reached the fourth level of heartforce. Of them, Ning was the only one who had developed a soul heartforce technique! In other words...in the entire Three Realms, there was no Empyrean God or True Immortal whose Heaven Punisher was stronger than Ning's. His was the most powerful of them all!

"Godking." Boundless hatred could be seen within Ning's eyes.

Whoosh.

Ning walked down from the city walls, then towards the distant main palace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

If the Godking knew that his decision to force Ji Ning to make such an agonizing decision had resulted in Ning's heartforce advancing from the third stage to the fourth stage...it's hard to imagine how much regret he would feel. This was an advancement that was even more terrifying than perfecting the soul heartforce technique! And now...

he had personally created a freak who knew the soul heartforce technique and had fourth stage heartforce.

The Godking's original goal had merely been to make Ji Ning join the Seamless Gate.

Ji Ning was walking towards the main palace of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

"It's Ji Ning."

"Why is Ji Ning going towards the main hall?"

"He spent a few days sitting blankly atop the city walls. I wonder what he was thinking about? This must have been an enormous blow to him, and he also caused us to lose this Realmwar...I hope he's not blaming himself so much that his thoughts are in a complete mess, causing him to go seek out the Daofather.

"Alas...he truly is a peerless monster, the likes of which are rarely seen. I hope he hasn't been ruined by his Dao-companion..."

The Immortals who saw Ning walking towards the main hall all chatted amongst themselves.

Love...it was a single word, but because of this word, countless lives had been destroyed and countless paths had been severed. This happened far, far too often within the Three Realms. However...those who were able to persevere after suffering such blows, who were able to continue to advance...they all became awe-inspiring figures of the Three Realms. They were no longer referred to as 'monstrous geniuses'; they were known as the true experts of the Three Realms!

"Ji Ning?" The Xia Emperor walked out from the main palace. He said in surprise, "Why have you come?"

"I wish to see the Daofather," Ning said.

"The Daofather is not in a good mood. It's best if you don't go," the Xia

Emperor said hurriedly.

"Not in a good mood?" Ning was startled.

"Right." The Xia Emperor nodded. "Human Emperor Shennong is out of ideas, but the Daofather is still unwilling to give up. He's spent countless years building his Crimsonbright Realm up, after all. Thus, the Daofather went out to meet with other major powers, including the leaders of the Daoist Path and the Buddhist Sangha, as well as others, but...alas..."

Ning nodded. "I understand."

The Xia Emperor looked towards Ning. "Do you still wish to see the Daofather, then?"

Ning nodded.

Whoosh.

Ning's aura suddenly transformed from that of a Celestial Immortal to that of a Pure Yang True Immortal.

"Pure...Pure Yang?!" The Xia Emperor's eyes instantly turned round and huge. Overjoyed, he said, "Ji Ning, you made a breakthrough?"

"Yes." Ning nodded.

Since he'd already decided that he was going to win this Realmwar... he had remain careful of the Seamless Gate's intelligence network. Thus, Ning only revealed the fact that he had the power of a Pure Yang True Immortal, intending to force the Seamless Gate into a series of miscalculations. As for reaching the fourth level of heartforce...for now, he had to hide this. He would only reveal his power at a critical moment, allowing them to win this war in one blow.

But if he wanted to hide it from them...

He had to hide it from everyone! Only when he alone knew this secret would it truly be a secret. If he told anyone else at all, the Seamless Gate would have a chance to find out.

"Fantastic. This...this is absolutely fantastic." The Xia Emperor was extremely excited. "Your breakthrough to the Pure Yang level means that your Heaven Punisher will increase dramatically in power. If you join forces with the Seven Planets Empyrean God, you might be able to completely tie down the Daofather golem. During the last battle, the Seamless Gate managed to escape with some of its forces, preventing us from wiping them out. They still suffered castastrophic losses, however. If you and the Seven Planets Empyrean God can tie down the Daofather golem...leave the others, including the Three-Eyed Demon, to us."

"Let's go! Let's go see the Daofather." The Xia Emperor was incomparably excited.

"Alright." Ning followed the Xia Emperor into the main palace.

"The Daofather's in a side hall." The Xia Emperor led Ning forward in a very familiar manner. Soon, Ning saw a quiet, secluded side hall with Daofather Crimsonbright seated in the lotus position within it.

However...as soon as Ning saw the Daofather, he could sense the deathly, melancholy aura surrounding him.

This was a sort of melancholic aura which would naturally emerge once one felt completely powerless.

"Master." The Xia Emperor spoke out.

"Daofather." Ning called out respectfully as well.

Daofather Crimsonbright opened his eyes. Upon seeing Ning, he nodded gently. "It seems you've managed to bestir yourself a bit, Ji Ning. Our loss in this Realmwar cannot be blamed upon you. You couldn't have imagined any of those things happening. If we lose, we lose. There's always a victor and a loser in any war. Later, I shall

summon the other Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and army commanders and issue an order to retreat. You should roam the Three Realms a bit and relax. Both your master and myself have great expectations of you. Our war with the Seamless Gate shall continue. Although we've lost here, we'll still need you to go fight in other places in the future."

The Daofather was a Daofather, after all. Although he felt grief at completely losing his territory and his foundation, his gaze was still focused on the Three Realms as a whole. He naturally didn't wish to see Ji Ning sink into endless despair; in fact, he didn't even want to blame Ji Ning at all.

"Master...Ji Ning broke through to the Pure Yang True Immortal level," the Xia Emperor said hurriedly.

Daofather Crimsonbright was briefly stunned...and then his eyes lit up!

His melancholic aura completely vanished. He once more became full of vigor and energy. He stared at Ning, then said with a laugh, "I really have grown old. I was so dispirited by this Realmwar that I've become as blind as a bat. I didn't realize you made a breakthrough, even though you are standing right in front of me. Haha...Pure Yang True Immortal...you've broke through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal...then doesn't that mean your Heaven Punisher shall dramatically increase in power? If you join forces with the Seven Planets Empyrean God commanded by Redsnow, you should be able to tie down the Daofather golem, right?"

"Daofather, please give me 9000 Celestial Immortals and 810,000 Loose Immortals so that I may create a maximum-power Heaven Punisher," Ning said respectfully.

"Superb."

Upon seeing how confident Ji Ning was, Daofather Crimsonbright couldn't help but call out the word 'superb'. Ji Ning had previously

already commanded 3000 Celestial Immortals; all they had to do now was merge six more Heaven Punisher armies into his army. Six ordinary Heaven Punishers wouldn't make much of a difference in the grand scheme of things.

"I'll give the orders right away. Prepare for a final battle against the Seamless Gate!" Daofather Crimsonbright's eyes gleamed with light. His aura filled the heavens, and his voice boomed forth.

Chapter 52 – The Confident Evergreen

Just a short while later.

Per Daofather Crimsonbright's orders, all the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and army commanders assembled at the main hall.

"What?"

"We're going to go fight?"

"The Seamless Gate now has a Daofather golem. How are we supposed to beat that?" Once Daofather Crimsonbright said that he was going to launch a true, final battle against the Seamless Gate, everyone was completely speechless. They weren't afraid of death, but no one would be willing to throw their lives away in a situation where they had no chance of winning at all.

Daofather Crimsonbright looked down at his subordinates, then turned his head to look towards a side door. "Ji Ning, come out."

The Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and army commanders all felt puzzled.

Ji Ning?

"Let Ji Ning come out? After experiencing his Dao-companion's betrayal...I imagine that he couldn't have fully recovered yet."

"I don't understand what the Daofather is planning."

"Are we supposed to entrust everything to Ji Ning, who is at the brink of absolute collapse?"

"He can't be joking with us, can he?"

Some felt anger towards Ning, while others felt sympathy and pity. All of them, however, felt certain that this peerless genius must have been delivered a blow from which he would need time to recover.

Footsteps rang out.

"Eh?" Upon seeing Ji Ning walk out, virtually everyone was stunned.

"He...he..."

"Pure Yang?"

"Impossible!"

Almost all of the Immortals and Fiendgods within the main hall were stupefied. They knew exactly how heavy a blow Ji Ning had just suffered. In their private conversations, most of them secretly opined that Ji Ning would probably wallow in his misery as a result of this blow. None of them had imagined that Ji Ning would actually break through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal at such a critical point in time!

To break through into the Pure Yang level was no easy feat. To completely and thoroughly master a Grand Dao was no easy task. Given the blow he had suffered and the mental anguish he was in...it would have been incredibly, incredibly difficult for him to make a breakthrough in the Dao of the Sword.

But...

The truth was right before them. The dense Pure Yang aura surrounding Ji Ning was unmistakeably real!

"Ji Ning has broken through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal. His Heaven Punisher can now command much greater power." Daofather Crimsonbright's voice boomed down from his high throne. "I will put 9000 Celestial Immortals and 810,000 Loose Immortals under his command, allowing him to form and command a perfect Heaven Punisher! Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher, when working in concert with Redsnow's Seven Planets Empyrean God, will handle the Daofather golem."

Daofather Crimsonbright continued, "All of you are to immediately

summon your soldiers and prepare for the final battle! In this final battle, our goal is to completely shatter the forces of the Seamless Gate and to protect our Realm!"

"Yes!" All of the Immortals and Fiendgods awoke from their stupor. They were all incomparably delighted, and their eyes glowed with excitement.

Prior to this, they all seemed to have lost their souls. They had no morale to speak of...and even Daofather Crimsonbright himself had been surrounded by a melancholic aura. But now, upon seeing a chance to gain victory, all of them became filled with a desire to do battle. They were so excited that their hearts once more began to boil with hot blood.

"Formidable."

"He was actually able to make a breakthrough to the Pure Yang level after suffering such a blow."

"Incredible."

"This Ji Ning truly is incredible!"

Previously, quite a few of them had felt resentment towards Ji Ning, but all of that dissipated like smoke. All they felt towards him was amazement and admiration! To be able to make a breakthrough and completely change the course of the war at such a critical moment... how could they not feel admiration?

The grand army began to mobilize.

Sinuous Raindragons and towering Pangu War-Formations once more took form, along with many Heaven Punishers.

The most astonishingly powerful aura, however, came from Ji Ning's 'Darknorth Army'.

At present, the Darknorth Army had a total of 9000 Celestial

Immortals and 810,000 Loose Immortals! This was the most perfect form possible for the [Heaven Punisher Formation]. The amount of natural energy which this sea of Immortals could summon...it was at an absolutely incomprehensible level. However, even Xingtian himself had only created a 'perfect' version of his formation just for the sake of completeness; he himself felt that it was a waste for an Empyrean God or True Immortal to use it, as there was simply no way for them to use all that energy.

"Assemble the formation." Ning gave the order.

The 9000 Celestial Immortals were spread out around Ning, protecting him like a hive of hornets protecting their queen.

As for the 810,000 Loose Immortals, they were like countless stars or grains of sand that were spread out throughout the formation. As the incomparably marvelous formation began to be activated, an absolutely shocking whirlpool of energy was formed around the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. This was the very first time the Crimsonbright Realm had truly, completely unleashed the full power of a Heaven Punisher. Once the number of Immortals had reached the target number, the amount of natural energy they could command was similarly astonishing.

Rumble...

The natural energy had become completely solidified, seeming to have transformed into enormous pillars of water that surged towards Ning.

The massive water pillars, many tens of thousands of meters in length, swirled around Ning's army before rapidly condensing around it. Slowly...the bones, the flesh, and the skin began to take form as an unprecedently enormous Heaven Punisher appeared.

"What a powerful aura."

"This is too powerful."

"I feel as though...he's roughly on the same level as True Gods or Daofathers."

When the perfect Heaven Punisher appeared, all of the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Crimsonbright Realm were stunned. However... they also all knew that if the commander of the formation was unable to command and control all of that massive power, the power would completely go to waste! Even amongst Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, there were many who couldn't fully control 100% of the power of the simplest types of Heaven Punishers, much less the perfect ones!

"Whew." Ning felt absolutely inconceivable power coming from the perfect Heaven Punisher he commanded.

"Arise." Ning began to take control over the power of the Heaven Punisher. He applied heartforce to his soul, then used his Pure Yang energy to go all-out in taking control over the energy within the formation! More and more power began to enter the Heaven Punisher through the formation. Ten percent. Twenty percent. Thirty percent. An absolutely unbelievable amount of energy was coming under Ning's command.

Only the energy that he could control was 'his'; anything he could not control would be just wasted energy.

Finally, Ning reached his limit.

"Ninety percent! I can vaguely sense that I'm controlling ninety percent of the power of this perfect Heaven Punisher." Ning felt stunned as well...because he could sense that just ten percent of the power of the perfect Heaven Punisher was already vastly more powerful than the full power of his old Heaven Punisher, which had merely been powered by three thousand Celestial Immortals and three hundred thousand Loose Immortals.

Fortunately, his heartforce had reached the fourth stage. Otherwise...with just third-stage heartforce, even if he used his soul

heartforce technique he would probably only be able to just barely command a tenth of the power of this perfect Heaven Punisher.

No one could tell from the surface as to how much control Ning had over the Heaven Punisher Formation. Not even the primordial wargod who created this great formation, Xingtian, would dare to believe that a mere Empyrean God or True Immortal would be able to take almost complete control over a perfect Heaven Punisher.

"Excellent." Daofather Crimsonbright's voice boomed out, his eyes filled with a desire to battle. "It's time for the final battle. Let's completely wipe out the Seamless Gate!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

The countless Immortals and Fiendgods turned frenzied with their desire to kill.

"Head out!" Daofather Crimsonbright pointed towards the distant Seamless City.

Instantly, a series of booms could be heard as the entire grand army charged towards the distant Seamless City, blotting out the very skies themselves as they moved.

.....

Within the vast world of darkness.

"What?!"

The Godking, seated upon his massive throne, was stunned and enraged. "He actually broke through? Broke through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal?"

"He suffered such a mental blow, then actually made a

breakthrough?"

"His soul heartforce technique had already reached the stage of mastery. Now that he's become a Pure Yang True Immortal and has a perfect Heaven Punisher under his command...I imagine that his Heaven Punisher, all by itself, is comparable to the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater. I predicted that he would be would become a threat, but I was always just one step too slow. One step!" The Godking felt furious, stunned, and regretful.

.....

The Seamless City. Daofather Ink Bamboo convened all the Empyrean Gods, True Immortals, and army commanders to meet with him.

Daofather Ink Bamboo stared down at his soldiers, his voice low. "I trust you can see that the Crimsonbright Realm's army is calling us out to do battle! The reason why they have dared to emerge is because their 'Ji Ning'...has already broken through to become a Pure Yang True Immortal."

"Pure Yang True Immortal?"

"He's reached the Pure Yang level? Wasn't his Dao-companion Yu Wei one of us? He was betrayed by his Dao-companion...but was actually able to break through to become a True Immortal?"

The Immortals and Fiendgods of the Seamless Gate were all stunned and baffled.

The Great Sage Who Swallows the Mountains narrowed his eyes, then said, "Ji Ning is extremely skilled in commanding Heaven Punishers. Even before this, he was extraordinarily powerful. Now that he's broken through, I'm afraid that his Heaven Punisher, just by itself...will be on par with our Three-Eyed Demon."

"Right." The seventh fairy of the Nine Cloudmist Fairies frowned. "Last time, our army collapsed and fled due to the appearance of

that Seven Planets Empyrean God. Quite a few of us were slaughtered. If it wasn't for the Daofather golem, we would be at a decided disadvantage against them in forces. If Ji Ning and Redsnow use their Heaven Punisher and Seven Planets Empyrean God to tie down our Daofather golem...we are probably going to lose!"

"Right."

Daofather Ink Bamboo, seated above them, nodded. "Yes. The main issue in this battle revolves around the question of whether or not Ji Ning and Redsnow, when fighting together, can tie down our Daofather golem."

"If they can tie it down...they also have another portion of Shennong's medicine! They outnumber us as well. Although we have the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater...we will probably still lose." Daofather Ink Bamboo looked towards Sword Immortal Evergreen. "Evergreen, we'll be counting on you in this battle."

"Don't worry, Daofather." Sword Immortal Evergreen's eyes flashed with fierce light, and his voice was icy but confident. "The Daofather golem possesses inconceivable power. Even if a true Daofather comes, it will still probably remain undamaged. Under my command, the Daofather golem will be exceptionally nimble and agile. The two probably won't be able to join forces against me; instead, I'll break them down one by one."

"Right. The Daofather golem won't be so easily dealt with."

"They definitely won't be able to stop it."

The Seamless Alliance wouldn't easily admit defeat either.

The Daofather golem...

Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher and Redsnow's Seven Planets Empyrean God...

Which would be more powerful?

Neither side could be completely certain.

"Evergreen, your mission in this upcoming battle will be the most important one." Daofather Ink Bamboo looked towards Sword Immortal Evergreen. "No matter what, don't disappoint me or the Godking."

"Daofather, don't worry at all. I'll definitely bring back the heads of Ji Ning and RedSnow and offer them to you and the Godking." A sharp, sword-like aura could be seen within Evergreen's eyes. He was completely confident in himself.

"Alright."

Daofather Ink Bamboo swept the main hall with his gaze. He growled, "Then...let us go out and fight! This will be the final battle. Break apart the Crimsonbright Realm's forces and sweep them out like trash!"

"Yes!" The Immortals and Fiendgods all acknowledged to the order.

Soon, the air above the Seamless City became filled with White-Faced Flood Dragons, Bifang Cranes, Zhuyan Apes, and other Terrorbeasts, as well as many Empyrean God golems and other powerful figures such as the Three-Eyed Demon. The most dazzling of all figures...was the titanic, crimson-gold figure that hovered in the skies. It looked just like an enormous spider...and it emanated an aura that was no weaker than the aura of a True God or Daofather!

The two massive armies stared against each other from afar.

"KILL!" Following an earth-shattering roar, the army of the Seamless Gate charged through the skies, blotting out the sun as they swept towards the Crimsonbright Realm's forces.

Chapter 53 – Cleaving Heaven and Earth

“Hmph.” Sword Immortal Evergreen could sense that he had become one with the Daofather golem...and the tremendous power which the Daofather golem contained.

“The aura of that perfect Heaven Punisher is quite strong as well. It lives up to its reputation as a grand formation formed from 9000 Celestial Immortals and 810,000 Loose Immortals. The aura alone is no weaker than the aura of my Daofather golem.” Sword Immortal Evergreen, however, wasn’t worried in the slightest. In fact, he was rather disdainful. “It’s all show and no substance. What’s the use of just having an aura of power? Although it is very strong, taking control over all that power is harder than ascending to the heavens! Even the simplest version of the Heaven Punisher is difficult for many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals to command, much less the perfect version.”

The Heaven Punishers could be divided into three tiers.

The simplest version had 1000 Celestial Immortals and 100,000 Loose Immortals.

The expert version had 3000 Celestial Immortals and 300,000 Loose Immortals.

Only when 9000 Celestial Immortals and 810,000 Loose Immortals were used, however, was the Heaven Punisher ‘perfect’, allowing it to reach an inconceivable level of power. If Ning, as a Pure Yang True Immortal, merely had third-stage heartforce and mastery over the soul heartforce technique...he’d be able to command at most a tenth of the Heaven Punisher’s full power. From this, one could imagine how truly difficult it was for one to take command over the perfect Heaven Punisher’s power.

“I’m different from him!”

“I have a Daofather golem, and I have complete control over all of its

power. Ji Ning isn't much of a threat; to the contrary, it's the Seven Planets Empyrean God, which seems to have a weaker aura than mine, which is dangerous. It is formed from seven Empyrean Gods, and Redsnow has complete control over all of its power as well."

Under Evergreen's control, the Daofather golem was extremely fast.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Distorted light could be seen in the skies. The Daofather golem looked like a spider crawling upon the vast web of heaven as it charged forward, the first to attack the Crimsonbright Realm's forces.

This battle wasn't just being watched by Daofather Crimsonbright, the Godking, and Daofather Ink Bamboo. In truth, more than 90% of the Daofathers of the Three Realms were watching this battle.

.....

The Celestial Realm.

Mount Ling, in the western region.

Lord Buddha was seated up high on his honored throne, radiating a boundless aura of light. The light surrounding him was dazzling to behold, and if one looked at it carefully, one would be able to vaguely make out the colors of the Five Elements. Beneath him was seated Amitabha, Kshitigarbha, Maitreya, and other major powers of the Buddhist Sangha.¹

Lord Buddha, also known as Tathagata, was the highest-level Buddhist leader of the Three Realms. His power was inconceivable, and the divine abilities he had devised, such as the [Vairocana Guardian Halo] and the [Buddha-Realm Within the Palm] were some of the most supreme divine abilities of the Three Realms. Only Mother Nuwa was more powerful than him.

The Buddhas seated below him were all extraordinarily formidable as well.

Amitabha, for example, had created ten million clones of himself. In both the Primordial Era and the modern day, his many clones were constantly spreading the teachings of Buddhism. It could be said that many of the most formidable figures of Buddhism had received some degree of tutelage from Amitabha. There was a widespread saying; more than half of the arhats and bodhisattvas of the Three Realms had been taught by Amitabha and thus succeeded in their cultivation.²

The countless bodhisattvas and arhats thus naturally felt tremendous gratitude towards the Buddha Amitabha. Thus, Buddha Amitabha had a very special status amongst the ranks of the Buddhist Sangha. He was often referred to as the 'Teacher Buddha', or as the 'Welcomer Buddha', which referred to his actions in welcoming his many adherents to his pure land of Sukhavati, the Western Paradise.³ The holy light radiating from Buddha Amitabha was a light of infinite kindness and gentleness. Anyone who saw it would feel inner peace, and they would uncontrollably wish to kneel down and listen to his teachings.

"Multiple Realmwars have occurred within the Three Realms. All the major powers are tiring themselves out for the sake of this great war." The gaze of Lord Tathagata pierced through the vast Void, allowing him to see the battle within the Crimsonbright Realm. "For the sake of his Realm, Crimsonbright has done everything he can. This Realmwar is a far greater one than the ones which have come before. Welcomer, do you think they can win?"

Buddha Amitabha's gaze was kind and benevolent. Clasping his hands together, he said, "The key issue in this battle revolves around the battle between the Daofather golem, which shall battle Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher and Redsnow's Seven Planets Empyrean God."

The other major Buddhist powers were watching as well.

It was only natural that they cared.

It was a minor matter for a Celestial Emperor to be changed, but a

Realmwar would have a major impact on karmic luck! The two sides were currently engaged in a war for karmic luck, with the Endwar only coming once both sides were convinced that no further gains could be made. That was when all of the major Buddhist powers would have to go all out as well.

"I wonder how many of us shall be at Mount Ling, after the great storm passes." Lord Tathagata stared downwards, sighing to himself. He could never forget how much blood had been shed when the Primordial Era was brought to an end. Even he had very nearly perished before the might of the Lord of All Things. Fortunately, by relying on his [Golden Nirmana Body], he was able to survive and keep the Lord of All Things tied down.

That had been a calamitous war.

The majority of the Buddhas of the Buddhist Sangha had died in battle. Fortunately, Mother Nuwa had made a breakthrough in the end, allowing for a reversal in the war!

.....

The Celestial Realm.

The Dao Palace, in the eastern regions.

Daoist Three Purities was seated high up upon his throne. Unlike Lord Buddha, Daoist Three Purities had a much more reserved aura. And yet, when one looked at Daoist Three Purities...one would occasionally feel as though one was seeing a terrifying illusion of the destruction of the entire Three Realms.

Beneath him were seated the major powers of the Daoist Path.

"We are about to see a result to this Realmwar," Daoist Three Purities said softly. "Zixiu, who do you think will win?"

An old man with a long beard who was dressed in loose robes said softly, "Fifty-fifty."

This old man was Daofather Carefree. He was also known as Zhuang Zhou...Zhuang Zixiu! ⁴

Long ago, two True Gods were born from the primordial chaos and became extremely good friends.

One was Yuanshi Tianzun, the Exalted Celestial of Genesis. The second was Xiaoyao Tianzun, the Carefree Exalted Celestial.

The two had trained painstakingly, with Yuanshi Tianzun having mastered the Heavenly Dao of Yang and the Heavenly Dao of Destruction. Of the ten Heavenly Daos, however, the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos was the most exalted of Daos. The Heavenly Dao of Life was mated with the Heavenly Dao of Destruction, while the Heavenly Dao of Yin was mated with the Heavenly Dao of Yang. Last came the Five Elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. If one wanted to make a qualitative breakthrough, one would have to gain insights into matching sets of Heavenly Daos...which was incredibly hard. For example, if you gained insights into the Heavenly Dao of Life, then the Heavenly Dao of Life itself would interfere with your efforts to gain insights into the Heavenly Dao of Destruction, preventing you from calmly training in it.

Or, for example, the Five Elements.

If one managed to master metal, wood, water, and fire...then when one began to work on water, one would suffer many interferences. Thus, it was incredibly difficult to master the full set of Five Elements, the duality of Life and Destruction, or the duality of Yin and Yang.

Lord Tathagata had managed to master the entire Five Elements of the Heavenly Daos, which was why he was able to become the leader of the Buddhist Sangha!

Yuanshi Tianzun had tremendous willpower and determination. During the Primordial Era, he placed a seal on his own truesoul, one which locked away his memories and prevented him from

reawakening them unless he fully mastered the Heavenly Dao of Yin. He then sent himself into the Six Paths of Reincarnation and committed suicide, sending his truesoul into the cycle of reincarnation.

He was reborn multiple times. On his ninth life, he was reborn as Laozi⁵! In this life, he finally embarked on a path of nonstop breakthroughs, culminating in him mastering the Heavenly Dao of Yin and becoming a Daofather. At this moment, his memories were completely reawakened...and with Yin and Yang joined together, his power instantly skyrocketed, resulting in him standing at the very pinnacle of the Three Realms! Back then, of course, Mother Nuwa hadn't reached the Pangu level yet.

He devised a technique which allowed him to transform in the Three Pure Ones; Shangqing the Supreme Pure One, Yuqing the Jade Pure One, and Taiqing the Grand Pure One. His three incarnations all had their separate strengths, and they were each very suited to their respective Heavenly Daos.

Daoist Yuqing was his former, true body; known as Yuanshi Tianzun, it controlled the Heavenly Dao of Yang.

Daoist Shangqing was known as Lingbao Tianzun, the Exalted Celestial of the Holy Treasure. He controlled the Heavenly Dao of Destruction.

Daoist Taiqing was the reincarnated Laozi, the master of the Heavenly Dao of Yin.

When Daoist Three Purities had devised this technique to create the Three Pure Ones, his three incarnations were capable of joining together to reach an unfathomable level of power. He had even been able to battle the 'king' of the Seamless Gate for a long period of time.

Committing suicide and sending the truesoul to be reincarnated was incredibly dangerous. For example, if in a reincarnated life he had

become a Celestial Immortal, then suddenly was killed and had his soul shattered, his truesoul would've been sent into the River of Destiny. He would've truly been dead, then! What he did was a dangerous gamble...but Yuanshi Tianzun possessed astonishing willpower and determination, which was why he dared to act in such a way.

The Carefree Exalted Celestial, however, didn't possess that sort of determination. He did, however, create an incarnation which he sent to be reborn and experience new lives. In these new lives, however, he was naturally unable to gain any insights into the corresponding Heavenly Dao. Still, he didn't care about this at all, because his power was still considered one of the top five of the Daoist Path.

Lu Dongbin had taken on two true teachers. One was Daoist Three Purities, while the other was the Carefree Exalted Celestial.

.....

The imperial palace of the Primordial Imperial Clan, and other regions within the primordial chaos, such as Shennong's residence or the residence of the ancient Suiren.

These ancient figures, some of whom were legendary recluses of the Three Realms, were all watching this battle. Perhaps they might've been reclusive in the past, but now that the storm had come, there was no way for them to avoid it. They would have to fight as well.

Similarly...

Some of the ancient, major powers of the Seamless Alliance, scattered throughout the Three Realms, were watching as well. This was the time for the war for karmic luck, which was why they permitted the Godking to be in charge of the Seamless Gate! When the end came, however...these ancient figures would emerge. Long ago, they had followed behind their king...and compared to them, this 'Godking' was actually one of their juniors.

"This battle hinges on the performance of those three." All the major powers understood this.

.....

On the battlefield.

The Daofather golem was the fastest on its side, while the Seven Planets Empyrean God and perfect Heaven Punisher were the fastest on the Crimsonbright Realm's side.

The three of them were like the tips of the spear for their respective armies, and they headed straight towards each other.

Whoosh!

As the titanic spider flew forward, it suddenly lashed out with two of its slender, knife-legs, sending two blurry streaks of light flying towards the Crimsonbright Realm's army.

"Block it! Careful!"

The distant units immediately pooled its power to defend against the strike.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Although three Heaven Punishers and a Raindragon joined forces to block the strike, one of the Heaven Punishers was completely shattered. Fortunately, the Daofather golem had launched an attack from very far away, and so very few Immortals within the Heaven Punisher were slain.

"What incredible power. Ji Ning, let me test him first," Empyrean God RedSnow sent mentally.

Swish!

The Seven Planets Empyrean God brandished its spear. Snow began to fall in the area around it as spacetime began to twist and distort.

Its power increased dramatically as it charged straight towards the Daofather golem.

If Ji Ning was to explode forth with the full power of the perfect Heaven Punisher, his speed wouldn't be slower than that of the Seven Planets Empyrean God at all. However...Ning understood that once he unleashed his full power, the controller of the Daofather golem would become cautious! Thus, the best plan was to wait for them to actually clash. If he could catch his foe off-guard at the point of collision, it would result in a major advantage for him.

"Redsnow, you dare to take my Daofather golem head-on with that little bit of power you have? Die!" Sword Immortal Evergreen's voice rang out from within the Daofather golem, echoing throughout the battlefield.

"Damn that Evergreen."

"It's Evergreen."

The Xia Emperor and the others ground their teeth as they watched carefully.

"Break!" The Seven Planets Empyrean God flung its longspear forward with such incredible power that even the shaft of the longspear began to twist in mid-flight.

The Daofather golem immediately swept out with two of its front spider-legs, blocking the oncoming spear.

BOOM!!!!

A terrifying shockwave blasted outwards, forcing the Seven Planets Empyrean God backwards. Time began to twist and distort around it, allowing it to instantly retreat by several hundred kilometers, thus dodging the four retaliatory leg-strikes of the pursuing Daofather golem.

"Don't be so cocky!" As the Seven Planets Empyrean God retreated, Ji

Ning advanced.

"You're the one I really want to kill!" Sword Immortal Evergreen's morale soared. He had been able to easily beat back even the Seven Planets Empyrean God; was he going to be worried about Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher? Yes, the perfect Heaven Punisher had an incredible aura, but how much power would Ji Ning actually control?

Ning's Heaven Punisher ran forward on its bare feet, wielding a pair of enormous Ananda World-Swords in its hands.

"CHOP!"

An Ananda World-Sword was raised high into the air in a stance reminiscent of Pangu splitting apart Heaven and Earth to establish the universe. It chopped straight downwards! This was a stance which Ning had created after he thoroughly mastered the Grand Dao of the Sword...the twelfth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]. However, because he had been hiding his status as a Pure Yang True Immortal in the past, he had never used this technique before. Now...it was finally time for him to unleash it!

[Three-Foot Sword], twelfth stance – Cleaving Heaven and Earth!

With this stance, the entire [Three-Foot Sword] was finally perfected. These twelve stances covered the entirety of the Grand Dao of the Sword, from the basics to full mastery of it. The reason why Ning had chosen such a mighty name, 'Cleaving Heaven and Earth', was because he had been in an excellent mood and because his heartforce had been at the dominating 'ruler' stage.

"F*ck off." Sword Immortal Evergreen's Daofather golem laughed wickedly, once more using its two front spider-legs to block with the intention of sending Ning flying back as well.

BOOM!

The longsword slammed down upon the two spider-legs.

“Don’t take it head-on!”

“Careful!”

Although this took time to describe, it actually all happened as fast as lightning. Just after the Seven Planets Empyrean God retreated, Ji Ning’s swords came chopping down. This greatly shocked Empyrean God RedSnow and the others. He knew that Ji Ning had to have seen the astonishing power of the Daofather golem from its clash against the Seven Planets Empyrean God; how could Ji Ning be so foolish as to fight it head-on?

“Time to go d...what the hell!!!”

Just as Sword Immortal Evergreen’s morale was soaring, he suddenly sensed a surge of inconceivable power pass into the golem from the longsword. The power of the blow was so great...that even his Daofather golem felt somewhat unable to withstand it.

It was powerful.

Far too powerful!

BOOM! As Ning’s barefoot Heaven Punisher leapt forward, its angry sword-blow smote the Daofather golem down into the ground, causing the earth beneath it to cave in!

“What?!”

“The Daofather golem is actually weaker?”

“This...this isn’t possible.”

Everyone on the battlefield was stunned. The Seamless Gate’s forces had been very confident in the power of the Daofather golem; Evergreen was able to fully unleash all of its power, after all. Although the perfect Heaven Punisher possessed an aura of tremendous might which was comparable to that of an actual True God or Daofather...how much of that power could Ji Ning control?

How could he possibly be able to suppress the Daofather golem?

"Impossible!!!" Sword Immortal Evergreen was utterly enraged. He used all his power to push upwards while sending two more of his spider-legs upwards to block Ning's longsword. Four legs supporting it on the ground, four legs pressing upwards to defend; he was already using as much power as he could from the Daofather golem.

"You shall KNEEL before me!" Ning's other longsword came slamming down as well.

The same stance; Cleaving Heaven and Earth! When staring at it, one could almost see Pangu within the primordial chaos, brandishing his greataxe to chop downwards.

BOOM!!!!

The Daofather golem was using four of its spider-legs to block, giving it only four other spider-legs to stand on. In the face of this mountain of pressure that slammed down upon it...the four spider-legs it was standing on went limp as it was pressed down onto its knee-joints.

Silence.

The two armies had been charging towards each other, but had yet to actually join battle. Both instantly fell completely silent. The Crimsonbright Realm's forces, the Seamless Gate's forces...they all just stared in disbelief at this sight!

These are all important Buddhas in religious Buddhism. Lord Buddha usually refers to Siddhartha/Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha. Amitabha is the main Buddha of the extremely popular Pure Lands sect of Buddhism. Kshitigarbha is the bodhisattva of hell-beings, as he swore an oath to free everyone who was tormented in hell. Maitreya is the future Buddha who will come to Earth in the future, the successor to Siddhartha/Sakyamuni. ↵

In terms of enlightenment, in religious Buddhism, it basically goes arhat > bodhisattva > Buddha. ↵

One of the most important beliefs in the Pure Lands sect of Buddhism is that if you call out Amitabha's name at least ten times in your life, he will guarantee that you will be reborn into Sukhavati, a 'pure land' he created of pure bliss. ↵

Zhuang Zhou is an actual historical figure from the 4th century BC who wrote one of the most important philosophical Daoist books, the 'Zhuangzi'. ↵

Also known as Lao-Tzu, Laozi is the historical author of Tao Te Ching and the historical founder of Daoism, much like how Shakyamuni/Siddartha is credited as the founder of Buddhism. ↵

Chapter 54 – Release

The utterly indomitable Daofather golem...had actually been suppressed in power by a Heaven Punisher!

Those two swords had struck down as if they possessed the power to cleave apart Heaven and Earth. The Daofather golem was completely unable to endure their power, resulting in it being knocked into a kneeling crouch.

"How can this be?! Just him by himself?" Sword Immortal Evergreen's heart was filled with both rage and panic. "How can I possibly be unable to overcome Ji Ning? I should be able to beat him and Redsnow combined. How can I possibly be defeated by him alone?!" Sword Immortal Evergreen had already made many boasts before the Daofather and his fellow Immortals...and his victory was necessary and critical for the entire Realmwar to be won!

If he was to lose...how could he face the Seamless Gate afterwards?

He had already betrayed the Nuwa Alliance. He needed to have a firm footing within the Seamless Alliance now.

This battle was incredibly important to him!

"You imbecile! Why are you competing with him in strength? Since he has incredible power, hurry up and use your speed and agility!" Daofather Ink Bamboo's mental voice carried urgency and panic within it as well. "Quick, quick, quick! The two armies have already begun to fight against each other. You have to win. If you lose, our army will lose all of its morale and collapse!"

"Yes, Daofather. I was merely testing his strength, just now," Sword Immortal Evergreen immediately responded.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The Daofather spider-golem's thin legs began to move quickly,

tearing apart the ground as it scuttled backwards like a streak of twisted light, retreating into the distance.

Boom. Boom. Boom.

The armies of the Crimsonbright Realm and the Seamless Gate were quite fast as well. They had already begun to battle against each other. The soldiers of each side started to slaughter each other, and many Immortals and Fiendgods began to perish.

The Seamless Gate had suffered catastrophic losses last time. Although the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater led their allies, they were still at a marked disadvantage.

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The skies themselves seemed to turn dark as chaotic whirlpools of natural energy could be seen everywhere.

Ning's towering Heaven Punisher wielded two enormous Ananda World-Swords as he bound forward on bare feet, chasing after the Daofather golem.

"Hurry up and get rid of that Heaven Punisher and the Seven Planets Empyrean God," Daofather Ink Bamboo sent frantically. "Kill them as fast as you can. If you let them tie you down, we're going to lose!"

"Yes, Daofather."

Sword Immortal Evergreen ground his teeth, madness visible within his eyes.

"He's very strong; I can't fight against him head-on. But my Daofather golem is incredible fast and agile; I refuse to believe you can overcome me." The Daofather spider-golem's enormous body was actually so nimble that it left behind a series of twisted streaks of light in the skies as it charged towards Ning. Clearly, Sword Immortal Evergreen wasn't willing to lose by Ning's hands.

"Die." Four of the slender, knife-like spider-legs of the Daofather-golem pierced straight towards Ning's Heaven Punisher.

"F*ck off!" Ning's Heaven Punisher lashed out with its right hand, and the Ananda World-Sword within its right hand left behind a wave of light in the skies. It was like a waterfall of sword-light...and with a thundering collision, the four attacking spider-legs of the Daofather golem were completely blocked by this single sword-stroke.

"Entangle." Ning's other sword lashed out as well, transforming into a stream of sword-light of incredible speed and density. It struck down, pierced forward, slashed sideways...sword-light flowed past in so many different ways that it was as though a flood of sword-light was entangling the Daofather golem.

Whoosh.

At this moment, snowflakes began to drift in from far away. The spear-wielding Seven Planets Empyrean God had arrived as well, and as soon as it came, its longspear struck out like a swimming dragon against the Daofather golem.

Boom! Bang! Crash!

Consecutive assaults from Ning's Heaven Punisher and Redsnow's Seven Planets Empyrean God landed upon the body of the Daofather golem. The Daofather golem was completely undamaged, but due to the repeated assaults from the two of them, it had been temporarily tied down.

"Damn. Damn! How is this happening!?" Sword Immortal Evergreen was truly growing frantic.

"Senior Redsnow, leave this Daofather golem to me. Hurry up and help our army destroy the Seamless Gate's forces as fast as possible," Ning sent mentally.

"Ji Ning, are you sure you can handle it?" Empyrean God Redsnow sent mentally.

"I'm sure," Ning replied.

"Alright."

Empyrean God Redsnow trusted Ning; he knew Ning very well, after all, and understood his temperament. In addition, it was true that while the Seamless Gate's forces were at a disadvantage on the battlefield, the Seamless Gate simply had far too many of those Empyrean God golems. Killing them was far more difficult than killing the other Immortals and Fiendgods and Terrorbeasts. The counter-attacks led by the Seamless Gate's Three-Eyed Demon were also quite savage. If the fight continued like this...even if they ended up winning, they'd suffer heavy losses.

Swoosh! The snow continued to fall as spacetime began to twist and distort. The Seven Planets Empyrean God, longspear in hand, moved at an absolutely incredible speed as he charged straight towards the army of the Seamless Gate.

"What?! The Seven Planets Empyrean God is attacking!"

"Not good! Stop him, quick!"

"We're in trouble now."

The Seamless Gate's army instantly began to panic. They knew exactly how terrifying this Seven Planets Empyrean God was. During the last battle, the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater and multiple other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals had to join forces against it, but were still unable to defeat it.

Daofather Ink Bamboo was watching from atop the distant city walls of the levitating Seamless City. His face instantly changed, and he roared mentally, "Evergreen, quick! The Seven Planets Empyrean God has already left your region and is charging towards the main army! My army is completely unable to defend against it. The more time passes, the more of them will be slaughtered. The only person you are faced with is Ji Ning! Hurry up and get rid of him, then go

support the army!"

"He's by himself. I HAVE to be able to kill him." Sword Immortal Evergreen had gone completely berserk...but in truth, in his heart, he didn't feel any confidence.

This was because the power which Ji Ning had revealed was far greater than what he had expected. However, he also knew that for the sake of this entire battle, he had to kill Ji Ning no matter what, and quickly! The more this dragged on, the greater a massacre the Seven Planets Empyrean God would wreak upon the Seamless Gate's army.

Per the original estimations of Sword Immortal Evergreen, Daofather Ink Bamboo, the Godking, and the other major powers of the Seamless Gate, Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher and Redsnow's Seven Planets Empyrean God would perhaps be able to just barely hold their own against the Daofather golem. If the Seven Planets Empyrean God was to attack the army, then Ji Ning would be quickly killed, allowing the Daofather golem to then fight the Seven Planets Empyrean God by itself and kill it. Thus...per their original expectations, for the Seven Planets Empyrean God to abandon Ji Ning and instead attack the main army would be absolutely wonderful.

But though man proposes, Heaven disposes!

Yes, on the field of battle, the Seven Planets Empyrean God had chosen to attack the great army...and Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher truly was facing the Daofather golem by itself. But...could the Daofather golem kill it?

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"Die, die, DIE!" The titanic Daofather spider-golem had transformed into a series of twisted light-streaks, assaulting Ning's Heaven Punisher time and time again.

Boom! Boom!

Brandishing the two enormous Ananda World-Swords in his hands, Ning's aura seemed equivalent to Xingtian's own aura! Evergreen's Daofather golem was at a marked disadvantage, and Ning's sword-arts were extremely well-suited for defense. No matter how the Daofather golem assaulted Ning, it wasn't able to wound Ning in the slightest.

"Excellent!" Daofather Crimsonbright, watching from the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity, was instantly delighted.

On the walls of the Seamless City, however, Daofather Ink Bamboo's face was ashen.

They had lost.

Once he saw the Daofather golem go all-out but still be unable to kill Ji Ning, he knew that they had lost!

In truth, if the Seven Planets Empyrean God and Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher were able to block the Daofather golem, then the Seamless Gate would lose...much less Ji Ning being able to do it by himself.

"Since you can't kill him, forget about him." A deep, low voice boomed out within Sword Immortal Evergreen's mind.

"The Godking." Sword Immortal Evergreen was shocked.

He understood that upon seeing that this war was about to be lost, the Godking was no longer able to remain calm. The Godking was now personally giving orders.

"Hurry up and charge towards the Crimsonbright Realm's army. If you attack them, you'll at least be able to buy some time for our army to retreat." The Godking was suppressing his anger as he gave the orders. "Attack with all your power. Do everything you can. The more Immortals and Fiendgods you can tie down, the more of our forces will be able to retreat safely."

"Yes." Sword Immortal Evergreen acknowledged the order.

The enormous Daofather spider-golem turned and immediately began to leave, intending to charge towards the Crimsonbright Realm's army.

"You want to leave?" Ning ran forward, his tremendous power granting him incredible speed! Perhaps his Heaven Punisher was a bit weaker in terms of agility, but in terms of running speed alone he wasn't slower than the Daofather golem at all; he was in control of 90% of the power of this perfect Heaven Punisher!

In terms of strength, he was noticeably and significantly stronger than the Daofather golem.

In terms of speed, he wasn't any weaker than the Daofather golem either.

Whoosh. Ning took eight giant steps forward, then launched a blow of sword-light towards the retreating Daofather golem.

"What?!" Sword Immortal Evergreen was absolutely shocked.

He hurriedly shot forward like a streak of twisted light, seeking to dodge...but the massive Heaven Punisher, clad only in a fur loincloth, took yet another great leap forward. It caught up with just a step and once more launched a sword-light assault of incredible power.

.....

"Ahahah, the Daofather golem has been completely tied down. It can't even slow down our army's assaults. Kill them, kill them all!" Daofather Crimsonbright was absolutely beside himself with joy.

"Kill them all!" The Xia Emperor and the others finally let loose all of the repressed anger they had felt.

The Raindragons, the massive Pangu War-Formations, and the countless Heaven Punishers...they began a wild slaughter of the

enemy forces. Some of the Empyrean God golems were suppressed so thoroughly that they were even sucked away into magic treasures.

The Seven Planets Empyrean God in particular...its longspear was an absolute slaughterer!

Slash! Slash! Slash!

Fresh blood flew everywhere!

Countless Immortals and Fiends perished!

A massacre, led by the Seven Planets Empyrean God. It was an absolute massacre. The Seamless Gate's forces began to show signs of collapse.

Nobody could stop the Seven Planets Empyrean God. The only one that could, the Daofather golem...had been tied down by the inconceivably powerful perfect Heaven Punisher of Ji Ning.

"How could this have happened? How?!" Sword Immortal Evergreen, the commander of the Daofather golem, was now completely dazed and stunned. He was supposed to become the most dazzling figure to take part in this final battle...but instead, this had turned into an unexpected nightmare.

Right. A nightmare.

This terrifying Heaven Punisher in front of him...it was merely a Heaven Punisher, merely a formation composed of some Celestial Immortals and Loose Immortals. How could it possibly be able to tie down his incomparably powerful Daofather golem, which had been created from incredibly precious materials?

"How can he be so powerful? The Three Realms holds several formations like the 'Heaven Punisher Formation' or the 'White-Faced Flood Dragon Formation'...why is it that the one Ji Ning is commanding is so powerful? It should've been...it should've been my chance to dominate the battlefield...my chance to massacre them..."

Sword Immortal Evergreen was truly panicking now. He couldn't even imagine how he was supposed to face the other members of the Seamless Gate.

As for Ning, he remained completely focused on shutting down the Daofather golem, making it so that it was able to advance only at a very slow speed. There was no way he would be able to make it to the Crimsonbright Realm's forces. The Crimsonbright Realm's forces were thus able to utterly massacre their foes.

"Ji Ning, stay your hand! Stay your hand!" The Godking's voice rang out in Ning's mind.

"Godking?" Ning replied calmly, "This is war."

BOOM!

Ning launched yet another sword-blow, once more forcing the Daofather spider-golem to its knees.

"Stay your hand immediately. Otherwise...don't blame me if I kill your Dao-companion, Yu Wei! I'll let her truly perish!" The Godking went straight to threatening Ning.

Ning's eyes remained as cold as ice. "If you want to kill her, then kill her."

The Godking was instantly stunned.

"She's suffering endless torment within your Infinity Hells. If you kill her...it'll be a form of release for her." Ning's reply was very calm, but it filled the Godking's heart with utter ice.

Chapter 55 – Curtain Call

“Let us withdraw!” The Godking sent mentally to Daofather Ink Bamboo.

“A straight withdrawal? Without the Daofather golem protecting them, their losses will be castastrophic. The majority will probably die. Weren’t you going to use Yu Wei to threaten Ji Ning? Was it useless? If he just stays his hand slightly, the Daofather golem will be able to escape and help guard our retreat,” Daofather Ink Bamboo sent back.

If they were to begin a haphazard, unguarded retreat, there would be no one to protect them from the pursuing forces of the Crimsonbright Realm. It would be an absolute massacre! And this time, it would be even worse than last time. Last time, both forces were roughly equal in power, but the Seamless Gate still had suffered heavy losses. This time...the difference in power was significant.

“There’s nothing I can do,” the Godking sent mentally. “Withdraw. The sooner we withdraw, the more of our forces will survive.”

“Fine.” Daofather Ink Bamboo had an ugly look on his face.

“WITHDRAW!” Daofather Ink Bamboo’s instantly rang out in the minds of every single commander of the Seamless Gate.

“Withdraw.”

“Withdraw right away.”

This had already been an unbearably miserable battle for them. In fact, parts of the Seamless Gate’s army were already showing signs of collapse prior to this. Now...like floodwaters bursting through a dam, they began to collapse and flee.

“It’s finished.” The three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater

transformed into streaks of light, moving lightning-fast as they fled.

For the three of them at least, fleeing and staying alive was effortless.

"The Daofather golem isn't even guarding our retreat." The three of them were the fastest, and so they soon arrived within the Seamless City. They then turned to stare and sigh at the massacre occurring behind them.

"What a slaughter."

"I wonder how many will survive."

The three Diremonster Gods could only stand there and watch from the walls of the Seamless City. They didn't dare to re-enter the fray again at all.

They were able to escape due to how fast they were, but if they had been encircled and surrounded by layers of soldiers, they would end up dying as well!

"Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher is a bit excessively powerful." The three stared towards the distance. Ji Ning's Heaven Punisher wasn't weaker than Sword Immortal Evergreen's Daofather golem at all; it was able to completely tie the golem down.

"With Ji Ning tying down the Daofather golem, the Seven Planets Empyrean God is now invincible on the battlefield."

"A massacre. A simple massacre."

The three of them shook their heads. Even figures as hard-hearted as them felt an ache in their hearts as they watched. It was a miserable scene!

"No!"

"Save me!"

"Rescue me!"

The terrified army of the Seamless Gate fled frantically...but how many would actually escape? Some were killed as soon as they turned to flee. Some were surrounded and slaughtered shortly after running! As for the Empyrean God golems...given how terrible the Seamless Gate's position was, some powerful figures joined forces to completely suppress them and seal them away into treasures.

Flee, flee, flee!

The Seamless Gate's forces were completely focused on fleeing.

"They kept on telling us how powerful that Daofather golem was, but a single Heaven Punisher was able to suppress it. They've doomed us all!"

"That Sword Immortal Evergreen is a useless piece of garbage!"

"Evergreen doomed us all."

"Ahhhh!"

The slaughtered Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were filled with towering amounts of resentment. In the face of such an overwhelming disparity of power, even they were being slaughtered, with only a few managing to escape. Most were surrounded and killed! The Crimsonbright Realm's army was actively focusing on them, after all.

.....

The Celestial Realm. Mount Ling, in the western regions.

Lord Buddha sat upon his throne, gazing through the Void and watching the battle within the Grand Xia.

"Victory." Lord Buddha revealed a smile.

"This Ji Ning truly is formidable...and Subhuti truly is incredible in

teaching disciples." Amitabha nodded as well. "The rate at which this Ji Ning is improving isn't the slightest bit slower than the rate at which that monkey improved at." ¹

"That monkey is different from him. The monkey was born from the five-colored rainbow stone which Mother Nuwa used to repair the heavens. It absorbed and distilled the essence of Heaven and Earth, and so after taking on Subhuti as his master, he quickly became an Empyrean God. It is hard, however, for someone's natural disposition to be changed. We suppressed him and tempered him for many years before he slowly gained enlightenment. After going into seclusion for a long period of time, he finally managed to truly evolve and reach the True God level." Lord Buddha nodded.

The Primordial Era had given birth to some awe-inspiringly famous monsters, such as Erlang Shen, also known as Yang Jie, or Sun Wukong of Flower-Fruit Mountain. Although they were born in the early Primordial Era rather than when the universe was first established, they still possessed astonishing levels of talent. After experiencing the destruction of the Primordial Era, quite a few had reached the True God or Daofather level. But of course, the vast majority of those monstrous talents hadn't been able to make a breakthrough.

There were only so many major powers within the Three Realms, after all.

.....

The Celestial Realm. The Dao Palace, in the eastern regions.

"This Ji Ning...from the looks of it, his heartforce has reached the fourth stage." Daoist Three Purities nodded in approval.

"Yes. If his heartforce hadn't reached the fourth stage, there's no way his Heaven Punisher could be this powerful."

"He truly is formidable.. His heartforce has reached the fourth stage,

and he's also learned a soul heartforce technique. Amongst Empyrean Gods and True Immortals, Ji Ning truly is number one when it comes to commanding formations like the Heaven Punisher Formation."

The major powers seated below Daoist Three Purities all nodded as well.

Prior to this, they might've believed that Ji Ning had only reached the third stage of heartforce, but upon watching this battle...well, none of the major powers were fools.

No matter how formidable a third-stage heartforce cultivator was, he wouldn't be this formidable.

The fourth stage, however...

With it, Ji Ning could already be considered one of the most supreme Pure Yang True Immortals, even if he didn't have many other Immortals supporting him in formation; he was comparable to the other supreme divine archers in strength. With the other Immortals supporting him, and with his soul heartforce technique...he definitely had the power of a Daofather or a True God!

.....

The primordial chaos. Outside a thatched cottage.

Shennong and Patriarch Subhuti were also watching the battle for the Grand Xia through the Void.

"Subhuti, you've produced an excellent disciple. Our side has gained yet another formidable general." Shennong laughed while praising Subhuti.

"A teacher can show the way, but cultivation relies on one's self! It can only be said that I helped to guide him to his current accomplishments. But for him to reach the fourth stage of heartforce in such a short period of time...I truly did not expect this. I always

thought that his talent in sword-arts was superior to his talent in heartforce," Subhuti said. "That's why I was actually hoping that he would spend more of his time and efforts on the sword. After all, when swordforce is trained to a sufficiently high level, it is no weaker than heartforce!"

"All that can be said is that this disciple of yours has tremendous potential in both swordforce and heartforce," Shennong said with a laugh.

.....

As the many major powers of the Nuwa Alliance were all celebrating their side having gained yet another powerful general, the Seamless Alliance's major powers were filled with frustration and resentment.

They had lost this Realmwar!

In addition, the Nuwa Alliance had gained a valiant general in the form of Ji Ning. Ji Ning, all by himself, was probably an even greater threat than the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater. Most likely, only the truly supreme Empyrean Gods and True Immortals of the Seamless Gate, the ones who were protecting the Seamless Gate's most important worlds within the Three Realms, would be a match for him.

Empyrean Gods or True Immortals who were absolutely superior to Ji Ning? There were none!

But of course, there had been some in the past.

The most powerful Empyrean God in history, Houyi...one-on-one, at the Empyrean God level, he had slain a Daofather! The current Ji Ning, even while leading a million Immortals, would find it difficult to survive a battle against an actual True God or Daofather. Thus, he was still far from having reached the level of the legendary Houyi. However, in the current Three Realms, no monster like Houyi existed.

"They actually lost. Even with a Daofather golem, they actually lost."

The Allfiend world. Celestial Immortal Blackheaven was watching the battle for the Grand Xia be displayed within a mirror in front of him.

"My Daofather golem...wasn't able to defeat Ji Ning? He's only trained for a hundred years or so."

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven was enraged. "Imbecile. Idiot. Garbage!" He gritted his teeth. "That Sword Immortal Evergreen...he's a useless piece of garbage! Although he's skilled in sword-arts, he's only reached the second stage of swordforce. If he had reached the fourth stage of swordforce, how could he fail to kill Ji Ning? Ji Ning's only trained for a few years, but he's actually reached the fourth stage of heartforce."

"What should I do? What can I do?" Blackheaven was filled with frustration as he suddenly realized...killing Ji Ning would be far more difficult than he had anticipated.

"No matter what, I can't let Sword Immortal Evergreen take control over my Daofather golem again. He's just a useless piece of garbage." The enraged Celestial Immortal Blackheaven took out all his frustrations upon Sword Immortal Evergreen.

.....

The Daofather golem continued to focus on fleeing. Although Ning continuously moved to stop it, resulting in it moving a bit slower, in the end it was still able to escape into the Seamless City.

This Daofather golem was truly unbreakable, after all; there was no way for Ning to damage it at all.

"Victory."

"Victory."

"Victory."

Earth-shaking cries of victory echoed throughout the entire

battlefield. Countless Immortals and Fiendgods were roaring together, and an endless flood of Immortal blood had bathed the land, staining it an indelible red.

The towering figures of the Ning's Heaven Punisher stood alongside the Seven Planets Empyrean God. Together, they stared towards the distant, dark Seamless City.

"It's over," the Seven Planets Empyrean God sent mentally. "The Seamless Gate's losses were catastrophic; less than twenty percent managed to escape! This Realmwar has truly ended."

"Yes." Ning's Heaven Punisher nodded.

"Ji Ning...given your current breakthrough in power, you should be able to attempt the Empyrean Tribulation, I imagine?" The Seven Planets Empyrean God sent towards Ning.

This monkey is clearly Sun Wukong. ↵

Chapter 56 – Departure

“Yes. Once the Realmwar ends, I shall prepare for my Empyrean Tribulation,” Ji Ning sent back. His original plan had been to wait until his soul heartforce technique had been perfected before attempting the tribulation, as that would give him a better chance. However, things never happen quite according to plan. His heartforce had advanced from the third level to the fourth level; this was a qualitative change.

The stronger his heartforce, the greater his chances were of overcoming the demonheart tribulation of the Empyrean Tribulation.

By this point...there was no point in delaying any further.

“If my guess is correct, you haven’t merely become a Pure Yang True Immortal; you made a breakthrough in heartforce as well,” the Seven Planets Empyrean God sent.

“Yes.” Ning admitted to it.

When he unleashed his full power and tied down a Daofather golem with just his Heaven Punisher, he knew that any of the truly experienced experts of the Three Realms would most likely be able to guess at what had happened. For the sake of achieving victory in the Realmwar, and for the sake of wiping out as much of the Seamless Gate’s forces as he could, Ning didn’t mind revealing his true power.

The only thing that mattered was making sure that the outcome of his reveal was worth it.

And now...

This was an outcome that was completely worth it!

“So many of the Seamless Gate have died.” The Seven Planets Empyrean God stood next to him, staring at the rivers of Immortal

and Fiendgod blood that stained the vast wilderness. Countless corpses and magic treasures littered the ground. He couldn't help but let out a sigh.

"Not enough," Ning replied calmly. He watched as the armies of the Crimsonbright Realm tidied up the battlefield, collecting the many spoils of war. When their foes had fled, the Crimsonbright Realm's forces had naturally been completely focused on pursuing them, hoping to make their victory even more overwhelming. They hadn't had a chance to pick up the magic treasures that had been left behind by the slaughtered Immortals.

"Withdraw!" After a long period of time, Daofather Crimsonbright's voice rang out, echoing throughout the battlefield.

"Ahahaha..."

"Time to go back."

"Let's go back."

"That was excellent."

Filled with laughter and joy, the forces of the Crimsonbright Realm rejoiced as the entire army escorted Ning's Heaven Punisher and the Seven Planets Empyrean God back to the Eight Dragons Cloudcity.

.....

While the Crimsonbright Realm's forces were jubilant, the Seamless City was filled with a deathly silence. The aura here was both heavy and incredibly oppressive.

Too many of them had died.

"Alas."

"This really was..."

All three of the Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater were

perfectly fine, but four of the six Diremonster Gods of Mount Tonglian had been slain. As for the Nine Cloudmist Fairies, only the youngest Ninth Fairy had survived; the other eight had all died. Even True Immortal Whitepole, Empyrean God Threesuns, Empyrean God Beastleave, the Cavemaster of the Myriad Demons Cave, and the Hallmaster of Bloodcloud Hall had perished on the battlefield. Only Gatemaster Azurefox, who was skilled in escape techniques, had been lucky enough to survive.

Including Sword Immortal Evergreen, the total number of surviving Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on their side...was merely eleven!

"Disastrous."

"Disastrous."

The few lucky survivors felt only two emotions; joy for having survived, and grief for their losses.

The main hall of the Seamless City. The surviving Empyrean Gods and True Immortals were all gathered here. All of them were silent.

Daofather Ink Bamboo stared downwards towards them. His gaze lingered on Sword Immortal Evergreen for a moment, a cold light flashing through his eyes, before he said in a calm voice, "We have lost this Realmwar!"

The mood of the room became even heavier than before.

"However...there are always victories and defeats in war. There have been multiple previous Realmwars. We've won some of them, and we've also completely shattered their forces and massacred them." Daofather Ink Bamboo continued calmly, "This was merely one war in one of the many areas of the Three Realms. Since you all survived, you all have your own special abilities. In the future, our Seamless Gate shall continue to battle against the Nuwa Alliance. We'll need you to continue to go to war for us."

"Yes!" Sword Immortal Evergreen was the first to assent to this, and he did so hurriedly.

The other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals assented as well...and as they did, they couldn't help but glance sideways in a disdainful manner towards him.

"Evergreen." Daofather Ink Bamboo looked towards Sword Immortal Evergreen. He said coldly, "This time...you have truly disappointed me. Forget about 'defeating both Ji Ning and RedSnow'; Ji Ning by himself was enough to stun you."

Sweat appeared on Sword Immortal Evergreen's forehead. He understood that their losses in this Realmwar had been utterly catastrophic. He naturally had to shoulder blame for it. He immediately fell to his knees, then said respectfully, "Evergreen disappointed you, Daofather. Ji Ning's power truly was far beyond my expectations, which is why I ended up in such dire straits. Don't worry, Daofather; Evergreen shall definitely work hard to gain further insights and grow in strength, so as to be able to better unleash the power of the Daofather golem. Next time, I shall definitely slay Ji Ning."

"No need." Daofather Ink Bamboo shook his head. "The major powers have already issued an order. You are no longer required to control the Daofather golem."

Sword Immortal Evergreen's face instantly turned white. His control over the Daofather golem gave him a status which was slightly higher than that of even the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater. Without it, he was much weaker than them. In addition, if he had the Daofather golem with him throughout this great storm, his chances of survival would be thousands of times greater. After all, unless a Daofather personally intervened, it was almost impossible to kill him when he was hiding within the Daofather golem.

Thus, Sword Immortal Evergreen cared tremendously about this

Daofather golem. Ever since he had been assigned it, he had made up his mind to keep perpetual control over it.

Sword Immortal Evergreen was unwilling to just give up. He said frantically, "Daofather, I simply didn't have enough time. If you give me some more time, I'll definitely be able to unleash more power from the—"

"Enough!" Daofather Ink Bamboo snapped.

Sword Immortal Evergreen shut his eyes. He respectfully kowtowed, pressing his forehead down to the ground and saying nothing else.

"Quietly focus on your training and your meditations. The Godking and I both view you with great favor. If you can become a Daofather, you shall command far more power than you would with the Daofather golem," Daofather Ink Bamboo said.

"Understood," Sword Immortal Evergreen said respectfully.

Daofather Ink Bamboo nodded, then turned to look towards the three Diremonster Gods of Mount Dragoneater. In a noticeably more pleasant manner, he said, "Skyswaller, the three of you should make the arrangements for this Seamless City to leave the Grand Xia and return to the Fifth World."

"Understood," the three Diremonster Gods said respectfully.

Sword Immortal Evergreen, seeing this, couldn't help but secretly feel regret and hatred.

In the midst of a great tribulation like this, the more powerful one was, the higher one's status would be. Even the Daofathers were not immune to this.

"It's all due to that damnable Ji Ning. If it hadn't been for him, I would've slaughtered that Seven Planets Empyrean God, then led the army of the Seamless Gate in eradicating the army of the Crimsonbright Realm." Sword Immortal Evergreen's heart was filled

with endless hatred. "Just wait. I, Evergreen, will definitely train to become even more powerful, until the day comes when I kill you. And you three of Mount Dragoneater...I'll make you all kneel down to lick at my feet. Daofather Ink Bamboo? Hmph...you are nothing more than an extremely ordinary Daofather. Once I become a Daofather, even you shall have to bow your head before me!"

Evergreen had extremely great ambitions. He was completely different from Yu Wei.

Yu Wei and many others had become loyal followers of the Godking long ago, then had been seeded across the various major worlds of the Three Realms in an unorganized manner. They were allowed to develop without interference, and so the Nuwa Alliance had naturally found it very hard to identify them.

Evergreen, however, had long ago become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright. He truly did belong to the Nuwa Alliance. However, despite his painstaking efforts at training, he found it difficult to advance any further. Daofather Crimsonbright's abilities as a teacher were comparatively limited, but Evergreen truly desired to grow more powerful...and this desire caused him to become seduced by the seamless Gate. The Godking was the sole disciple of the most powerful member of the Seamless Gate, their 'king'. The 'king', even after having become merged into the Heavenly Daos, had continued to teach the Godking; naturally, his tutelage was extraordinary.

The Godking had used the exact same method to teach his own disciples as well, and so he was quite formidable in this regard.

Evergreen had been seduced by him. The Godking had transmitted some formidable techniques to him in the dreamworld, and had even personally expounded on the Dao to him. But of course, Evergreen had to pay a price as well. The price was...to leave the Nuwa Alliance and join the Seamless Gate!

"Nuwa Alliance? Who gives a damn about alliances? My personal power is what really matters!" Evergreen hadn't even hesitated

before immediately joining the Godking.

His focus on the Dao truly was quite frenzied.

Even Daofather Crimsonbright had noticed how single-minded he was in pursuing the Dao. Daofather Crimsonbright had even believed that Evergreen was his subordinate with the highest chance of becoming a Daofather! But what Crimsonbright didn't understand...was that Evergreen's ambitions were simply too wild and untamed. He had an almost fanatical, demon-like obsession towards advancing in the Dao, and it was this obsession which led to him joining the Seamless Gate.

As far as Evergreen was concerned, neither the Nuwa Alliance nor the Seamless Gate mattered.

He himself was the only person that mattered. His heart was filled with an extremely strong desire...that one day, he would become like Mother Nuwa, the most powerful figure of the Three Realms.

"By then...the Nuwa Alliance and the Seamless Gate will be like nothing more than dogshit before me. I, and I alone, shall reign supreme." However, Sword Immortal Evergreen kept his great ambitions hidden within his heart because they were simply too wild. Still...he continued to pursue them, never questioning or abandoning them.

.....

An enormous rift appeared within the skies, and the now-miniaturized Seamless City flew straight into the giant rift, disappearing from the world.

"They left."

Ning was alone atop the walls of the Eight Dragons Cloudcity. Turning his head, he looked towards the lively Crimsonbright camps. Because of their great victory, the tens of millions of Immortals and Fiendgods within the city were all celebrating.

"Ji Ning." A figure walked towards him from afar. It was the black-robed Xia Emperor.

"Imperial Majesty," Ning replied.

"You can just call me Xiamang," the Xia Emperor said with a smile. "In terms of status and influence, you aren't much lower than me. I might be thick-skinned enough to accept you addressing me as 'Imperial Majesty', but the other Empyrean Gods and True Immortals will undoubtedly curse me as being shameless."

Ning nodded gently.

"Everyone is very happy. The war is over. They've survived...and they've killed countless Immortals and Fiendgods of the Seamless Gate. You should go celebrate with them," the Xia Emperor said.

"No need." Ning gently shook his head.

The Xia Emperor didn't try to persuade him. He could sense that ever since Yu Wei's betrayal, Ji Ning's temperament and personality had changed. The Xia Emperor understood that her betrayal truly had been a huge blow to Ji Ning.

"Right. With the Realmwar over, the soldiers shall begin to return to their respective major worlds. The Immortals of our Grand Xia shall return with me to the imperial capital," the Xia Emperor said. "All of our Immortals and Fiendgods shall remain in the imperial capital. That way, they can easily join together to fight against the Seamless Gate as needed. I imagine that after Azurefox's Seamless Gate suffered such heavy losses, they probably won't be able to infiltrate us that easily again."

"What about you? Come to the imperial capital with us," the Xia Emperor said.

Of course he wanted Ji Ning to be in the imperial capital. The Seven Planets Empyrean God moved in lockstep with Ji Ning, which meant that Ji Ning represented a combat force consisting of a perfect

Heaven Punisher and the Seven Planets Empyrean God. This was equivalent to nearly half the total combat power of the entire Crimsonbright Realm!

"No, I need to undergo my Empyrean Tribulation." Ning shook his head. "Other places are not going to be safe. The Seamless Gate will undoubtedly attempt to disrupt my tribulation, no matter where I go. The only place for me is my master's place."

"Undergo the Empyrean Tribulation?" The Xia Emperor laughed and said, "Haha, yes, it is indeed time for it."

The Xia Emperor was in quite the celebratory mood.

He felt quite fortunate that he had chosen to treat Ji Ning so kindly all this time, especially in the dispute between him and the Youngflame clan. He had stood by Ji Ning's side the entire time, and had even personally intervened to rescue Ji Ning. These were all debts of gratitude that Ji Ning owed him! They were in the midst of a deadly storm. If he was to ask Ji Ning to help at a critical moment, how could Ji Ning possibly just watch with hands folded behind his back?

.....

"Ji Ning, in this war, you, Redsnow, and the rest of the seven have rendered tremendous military merits, and we killed countless members of the Seamless Gate at the end when they fled."

Daofather Crimsonbright was giving a personal audience to Ji Ning, Redsnow, and the rest of the seven Empyrean Gods. He urged them, "We've acquired so many treasures, and you deserve them. Why don't you want them?"

Ning shook his head. "I don't need them."

He truly didn't need them. He had already acquired enough from this war...and after he became the true master of the Starseizing Manor, he really wouldn't care about such a petty amount of

treasures.

"Haha...I know that you are going to undergo your Empyrean Tribulation soon." Daofather Crimsonbright said with a laugh, "After you become an Empyrean God, you'll be able to train the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] to the Ninth Cycle. I imagine you'll need quite a few Daofather-level Immortal pills! Forget about the treasures, then; I guarantee that I'll cover all of the pills you'll need to train to the Ninth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. However, I'll need a bit of time to prepare it all. After you complete your Empyrean Tribulation, I'll send them over."

"But..." Ning was stunned.

This was a tremendous gift. Although they had gained many treasures from this war, the value of all of them combined probably still wouldn't be enough for him to train to the Ninth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

"Just accept it, disciple. You've helped out Crimsonbright quite a bit this time. You can accept it with a calm mind." An old man with a white beard suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

"Master." Upon seeing him, Ning immediately called out to him respectfully.

"Even your master agrees. Just accept this small gift of mine." Daofather Crimsonbright did indeed feel grateful towards Ji Ning. He had also learned from Subhuti that Ji Ning was the successor to Daoist Threelives' legacy, and that the seven Empyrean Gods would follow Ji Ning. If it hadn't been for Ji Ning and the seven of them, he would've lost this war long ago.

If he lost the war...his losses would be catastrophic and agonizing. Compared to that? Although some Great Firmament Immortal pills were precious and rare, as a True God who had been born from the primordial chaos itself, he was still capable of giving them to Ning.

"Alright." Ning no longer refused.

"You've finished your arrangements, I imagine." Subhuti looked towards Ning. "If you have, then come back with me to Mount Innerheart and prepare for the Empyrean Tribulation."

"I've made all my arrangements. I can leave at any moment," Ning said respectfully.

He had already bid farewell to his master, Immortal Diancai, and had also bid farewell to his dear friends such as Unity and Allbeasts. Immortal Diancai, Unity, Allbeasts, Whacko...they cared deeply about Ji Ning and didn't want him to leave, but they understood that the safest place for his tribulation would be Mount Innerheart. That was a place which even other Daofathers would find difficult to enter.

Ning didn't have the authority to invite Unity and the others to Mount Innerheart. His only choice was to bid them farewell. Immortal Diancai and the others all followed the Xia Emperor back to the imperial capital, where they would be stationed! It wouldn't be too hard to meet with them in the future.

"Since you've completed your preparations, let us go. Crimsonbright, hurry up and prepare those Great Firmament Immortal pills. Once you've collected them, just let me know and I'll come pick them up." As Subhuti spoke, he waved his hand.

Whoosh.

A dark gray spatial whirlpool suddenly appeared within the palace. Subhuti led Ji Ning and the seven Empyrean Gods straight into the spatial whirlpool.

"It seems he is about to undergo the Empyrean Tribulation right away. I need to start gathering the pills right away as well." Daofather Crimsonbright hurriedly began to stroke his beard as he pondered this issue. Since he'd already boasted that he would cover all the pills, he had to be able to back it up. "I need to pay a visit to

Daoist Three Purities. He has the most Immortal pills. I'll go trade some treasures for them."

Daofather Crimsonbright continued to stroke his beard. He was in an utterly delightful mood. This Realmwar...he had won it!

Glossary

PEOPLE:

Gods:

Pangu : The creator deity who made the universe, the Fiendgod of Primordial Chaos.

Nuwa : The creator of humans, currently supposedly the most powerful god in existence and the only one to reach Pangu's level.

Cui Jue : The Lord of Cui Palace, the First Judge of the Dead. Also from Earth.

Grandma Meng : Dispenses her special 'elixir' in the land of the dead, which causes the dead to forget their memories before being reincarnated.

Ji Clan :

Ji Ning : The main character of this novel.

Ji Yichuan : The father of Ning, nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Number one expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

Yuchi Snow : The mother of Ning. Member of the Yuchi clan.

Ji Ninefire : The Patriarch of all five prefectures of the Ji clan.

Ji Young : The Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

Ji Lee : Nicknamed the 'Fire God', the number two expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. Leads a faction opposed to Prefecture Lord Young.

Ji Jadewich : The son of Ji Lee.

Ji Grizzly : The adoptive son of Ji Lee, had been taken in as an infant by a grizzly bear monster.

Ji Redflower : Friend of Ji Yichuan, rides an Azure Firebird.

Spring Grass : Also known as 'Miwa'. One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.

Blacktooth : The father of Spring Grass, and the chief of Blacktooth

Tribe.

Autumn Leaf : One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.

Blindfish : The number one archery expert, serves the Ji clan.

Mowu: An experienced Ninefang Warrior, loyal to Ji Yichuan. Follows Ning on his first adventure along with Autumn Leaf.

Ironwood Clan

Ironwood Zhan: A late Ki Refiner Xiantian expert of the Ironwood clan. Has a Bi'an Tiger as his spirit beast. Wielded the **Blackwood Vinewhip** as his weapon.

Miscellaneous

Juhua Immortal : A powerful Loose Immortal who lived for millions of years. Controlled an Immortal estate which he was the third master of.

Rampart : The disciple of the Juhua Immortal. Died somewhere.

CREATURES:

Godbeasts :

Armored Wurm : A dragon type Godbeast that seems to be like an Ankylosaurus.

Whitewater Hound : A large, snow-white hound-type creature. Ji Yichuan has one, who once saved Ning and Snow.

Emerald Skyserpent: A serpent-type Godbeast, one of the more powerful creatures in Eastmount Marsh. Fought against Ning several times when Ning was at the peak Houtian stage. Capable of 'Void Blink' upon reaching the 'one with the world' level.

Howling Moonwolf :

Earthquake Rhino :

Redclawed Goldenraven :

Thundersea Owl :

Landwyrm :**Other Monsters :**

Serpentwing : A named late Xiantian level winged serpent, lives in Serpentwing Lake.

Azure Firebird : A flying fire-type bird-type monster. One is in service to the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

ITEMS:

Dao Battle-Armor: A type of armor that allows multiple users to join their strength together.

Dao-seal : A magic scroll imbued with certain powers, such as the 'Divine Movement Seal', 'Light Body Seal', and more.

Kalestone : A naturally occurring gemstone which is like a 'bag of holding', able to store a certain amount of materials in an extradimensional space.

Goldstar Shirt : A naturally occurring treasure which protects against all attacks below the Xiantian level.

Darknorth swords : A set of three swords, extremely sharp. Originally a damaged 'magic treasure' of the 'flying sword' variety that was ranked. Purchased by Ning.

Blackwood Vinewhip : A magic treasure previously held by Ironwood Zhan.

Traceless Talisman : A single-use talisman that can allow a person to travel ten thousand kilometers in an instant.

TECHNIQUES:**Sword Techniques:****Possessed by the Ji Clan :**

[Raindrop Sutra]: The most defensive of the Ji clan. The technique

which Ji Yichuan became famous for using, thus being nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Includes the attacks: 'Drizzling Rain', 'Rain Line', 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks', 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', 'Tempest Curtain', 'Watertight', 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow', 'Merciless Waterflow'.

[Thunderflame Sword]: The most offensive technique of the Ji clan. Only three stances were found in the burnt manual, but despite that, is incredibly powerful. No defensive stances. Includes the attacks: *Thunderflash Flint, Blazing Thunderclap, Moth Flies Into the Flame* .

[Polaris Secret Manual]: A very balanced, orthodox technique, part of the [Polaris Sword Manual].

[Illusion Sutra]: An insidious technique that could be applied to any weapon. Allowed one to hide their true powers and actions.

[Melody of 10000 Swords]: The first 'elite' swordplay the Ji clan obtained, which they themselves developed. The most complicated, yet also the simplest when mastered.

Formation Techniques

Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation : A formation which Ironwood Zhan of the Ironwood clan had, set up by using eight formation flags. Very powerful at the Xiantian level.

Lesser Thousand Sword Formation : A formation of an enemy of the Juhua Immortal, uses up to hundreds of sword-type magic treasures.

Fiendgod Body Refining Techniques :

Possessed by the Ji Clan :

[Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]: The technique Ning chooses. The unquestioned best Fiendgod Body Refining, but also the hardest to learn. One has to be able to sense the Great Yang (Sun) and the Great Ying (Moon), then absorb their energies. If one is extremely suited, the first time training it, small balls of energy will appear in the trainer's hands, with the left having the 'Moon' with a picture of an 'Osmanthus Tree', while the right would have the 'Sun' with a picture of the 'Golden Crow'.

[Calamity Fiend] , [Indestructible Blood Fiend], [Song of the Inferno], [Vajra Buddhist Sutras], [Freeform Soul] , [Eternal Mysteries of the Yellow Earth] , [Spirit Fox Sutra] , [Sutra of the Future Buddha]

Footwork Techniques:

Shadewind Steps : A unique set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Taught to Ning.

Windwing Evasion : Another set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Can only be trained at the Xiantian level.

Divine Abilities:

Kuafu Sunchaser :

72 Transformations :

Three Heads, Six Arms :

Houyi Shooting the Sun :

Heavenly Transformation: Windwing Evasion (see above)

Other Techniques:

Nuwa Painting visualization technique : A soul-strengthening visualization technique taught by Lord Cui. Supposedly an elite skill even in the Deva realm, much less the mortal realms.

Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha : The visualization technique used by the Juhua Immortal.

Waterflame Lotus : A technique which Ning develops during a night of meditation by a pool through a hint of the Dao which he came to understand.

LOCATIONS:

Grand Xia Dynasty : The empire which rules over the entire world. Trillions of years old.

Stillwater Commandery: The Commandery region in which Swallow

Mountain is located. Controlled by the Marquisate of Stillwater.

Dark North Sea : The unending ocean in the north of the world.

Where Yichuan and Snow met and conceived Ning.

Swallow Mountain : A massive area, where Ji clan of the West Prefecture is one of the local hegemons.

Serpentwing Lake : A large lake a hundred kilometers long in the Swallow Mountain Area. Lair to the Xiantian monster, Serpentwing.

Eastmount Marsh : A large marsh with a lake in the middle of it. Home to many Xiantian level Diremonsters.

TERMS AND PHRASES:

Power Levels :

Houtian : Lifespan of a hundred years.

Xiantian : Lifespan of two hundred years. 'Diremonster' is a term used to refer to monsters who have reached this level.

Zifu : The 'Violet Palace'. At this level, one will be addressed as Zifu Disciple. Lifespan of five hundred years. Generally capable of 'dividing the mind'

Wanxiang : 'Myriad Manifestations'. At this level, one will be addressed as Wanxiang Adept. Lifespan of eight hundred years. Generally capable of 'divine will', which allows them to control objects with their mind.

Primordial : Can be referred to as Primordial Daoist. Generally capable of 'divine sense', an extrasensory ability.

Void : Can be referred to as 'Land Immortal', or 'Earthly Immortal'. In the later levels of the Void stage, a heavenly tribulation will test them. If they fail, then they will die and their spirits will be extinguished. If a Primordial's body is destroyed but manages to escape with his soul, then he will become a 'Loose Immortal', whose power is roughly on par with the 'Earth Immortals'.

Celestial Immortal : Only at this stage can one be considered to have ascended beyond the Three Realms and no longer be formed by the Five Elements!

Insight Levels:

Basic => Advanced => 'One With the World' => 'True Meaning of the Dao' => 'Dao Realm' => 'Dao Path'

The Greater Universe :

Three Realms : The 'Heaven' Realm, the 'Mortal Realm', and the 'Netherworld Kingdom Realm'

Six Realms of Reincarnation : Deva, Asura (these two are Heaven realm), Human, Animal (these two are 'Mortal' realm), Preta Ghost, Hell (these two are 'Netherworld Kingdom' realm)

Book of Life and Death : The book on which every person's fate is written, their birth, their life, and their death. A person can change their fate by their actions, however. Controlled by Lord Cui.

Miscellaneous Terms and Phrases:

Beasthead : Used to refer to an amount of gold that weighed ten pounds in the world where Ning was born into for his second life.

Fiendgod : Powerful creatures that were born from nature itself and possess unbelievable might. The creator of the universe, Pangu, was himself a Fiendgod.

Godbeasts : Monstrous beasts that have the lineage of the Fiendgods in them. Far more powerful than normal beasts.

Fiendgod Body Refining Technique : Techniques meant to build up the body and make it as powerful as a Fiendgod's. Far more powerful than Ki Refining of the same level. Cannot utilize magic treasures unless also training in Ki Refining.

Ki Refining technique : Techniques meant to build up internal ki energy, which allows one to use magic treasures at the Xiantian level.

Ninefang Warriors : A term for peak Houtian level warriors in the Swallow Mountain region.

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